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# \$1 levy plan for Mark Six

By Angela Li

A \$1 LEVY could be imposed on Mark Six tickets bought from supermarkets and convenience stores.

This was disclosed yesterday by Hongkong Lotteries Board secretary A K Evans.

He explained: "For example, if you want to buy a lottery ticket from a supermarket, you may have to pay \$11 but, if you go to the Jockey Club, you only have to pay \$10.

"The extra \$1 would be levied on lottery players and kept by agents."

Alternatively, retailers may be allowed commission based on the number of tickets they sell. It is not known if \$2 tickets would be subjected to the levy.

Mr Evans said the extra dollar could be a handling fee paid direct to agents by buyers or indirectly

from the seven-and-a-half per cent commission the Jockey Club receives from each Mark Six draw.

The commission covers the club's operating costs.

Mr Evans said a revision in commission percentage has yet to be worked out.

But the amount paid in prize money will not be affected, Mr Evans assured.

At present, 59 per cent of lottery takings is paid in prize money, 30 per cent goes in Government tax, three-and-a-half per cent to a Government lottery fund for charities as well as the seven-and-a-half per cent to cover Jockey Club operating costs.

Mr Evans denied that the Jockey Club would be making a profit from the scheme. Any commission to agents would come from the club's operating costs.

If the scheme goes ahead, terminals set up in supermarkets and convenience stores will be linked directly to the club's lottery system.

Said Mr Evans: "The Jockey Club will give full authority to agents to sell the lottery tickets on the condition that tickets are sold to players aged 18 or over.

"We will ask agents not to sell tickets to any underage players. If they do, we will take the terminal away."

In response to a possible loophole in which children under 18 may ask an adult to buy a Mark Six ticket and later on collect the prize for him, Mr Evans said the club could not ensure that children will not buy lottery tickets.

But he did not think they would be interested in buying them.