

Heightened vigilance urged amid increasing activity of hand, foot and mouth disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 22) urged the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene as the local activity of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) has been increasing in the past two weeks.

According to the CHP's latest surveillance data, the number of institutional HFMD outbreaks recorded increased from seven (affecting 33 persons) to 16 (affecting 61 persons) from the week of May 5 to that of May 12. As of yesterday (May 21), nine outbreaks involving 21 persons had been recorded this week. In the last four weeks, most outbreaks occurred in kindergartens and child care centres. As for enterovirus (EV) 71 infection, as of yesterday, four cases had been recorded this year.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year with the usual peak occurring from May to July. A smaller peak may also occur from October to December. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"We have issued letters to doctors, child care centres, kindergartens and primary and secondary schools to alert them to the latest situation. Schools are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks, which should be reported to the CHP for prompt follow-up," the spokesman added.

Management of venues with play facilities should pay special attention to the CHP's [Public Health Advice for Play Facilities](#) on appropriate infection control in activities involving young children under 6 during the peak season.

"We noted that HFMD activity in neighbouring areas such as Taiwan has also increased recently. Parents travelling with their children should pay special attention to personal and environmental hygiene while visiting play facilities or having close contact with other children," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, and especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- Maintain good air circulation;
- Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling diapers or other stool-soiled materials;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are

- dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly;
 - Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
 - Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
 - Children who are ill should be kept out of school until their fever and rash have subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted;
 - Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
 - Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The CHP's weekly report, EV SCAN (www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/21639.html), is issued every Friday to report the latest local situation of HFMD. The public may also visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) for more information.

[SEN witnesses signing of MoU between Hong Kong and Singapore \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, today (May 22) began his visit to Singapore where he attended a signing ceremony for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the National Environment Agency of Singapore (NEA) and the Environment Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government on professional staff development. He also met with Singapore officials responsible for environment, transport and technology.

In the morning, Mr Wong first held a bilateral meeting with the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Mr Masagos Zulkifli, to discuss matters of mutual concern. They also witnessed the signing of the MoU by the Chief Executive Officer of the NEA, Mr Tan Meng-wei, and the Permanent Secretary for the Environment/Director of Environmental Protection of the Hong Kong SAR Government, Ms Maisie Cheng. The MoU aims to enhance the synergy between both sides regarding professional staff training on the

environment front and to strengthen collaboration. Afterwards, Mr Wong met with officials from the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources and the NEA to learn more about their policies on climate change, energy efficiency and air quality management.

In the afternoon, Mr Wong visited a company providing electric car sharing services, and was briefed by company staff and officials from the Land Transport Authority on Singapore's electric vehicle and land transport policies. He also paid a visit to the Government Technology Agency, where he met with the Chief Executive, Mr Kok Ping-soon, to exchange views on smart city development.

In the evening, Mr Wong will attend a dinner hosted by the Senior Minister of State for the Environment and Water Resources, Dr Amy Khor. He will continue his itinerary in Singapore tomorrow (May 23) and visit Tengeh Reservoir and Semakau Landfill.



Operator and manager of unlicensed guesthouses fined

A man and a woman were fined \$8,000 and \$10,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (May 22) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in September and October last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Spring Garden Lane in Wan Chai and Portland Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on an hourly or daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The man and woman responsible for operating and managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

LCQ3: Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Kwok Ka-ki and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

For the purpose of handling a homicide case involving Hong Kong

residents which happened in Taiwan last year (the Taiwan homicide case), the Government submitted to this Council last month proposed legislative amendments, which sought to enable the Government to transfer suspects under a case-based approach to jurisdictions (including Mainland China) with which Hong Kong has not entered into any long-term surrender arrangements. Some members of the public have pointed out that upon passage of the proposed amendments, Hong Kong residents may be sent, for trial, to places where a fair and open judicial system is lacking, thus depriving them of the human rights protection under the Basic Law. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will transfer the suspect of the Taiwan homicide case to Taiwan only on the condition that the Taiwan side acknowledges that Taiwan is part of China; if so, whether it has sought confirmation from the Taiwan side on its acceptance or otherwise of this condition; if so, of the outcome; if the outcome is in the negative, how the Government handles the situation;

(2) as some Members of this Council have suggested that a sunset clause be made in respect of the proposed legislative amendments, or that the Offences against the Person (Amendment) (Extra-territoriality) Bill 2019 be enacted to handle the Taiwan homicide case, whether it has studied the feasibility of these options; if it has studied and the outcome is in the negative, of the justifications for that; and

(3) since the Government has, in response to the concerns of the business sector, decided earlier within a short period of time to reduce the categories of offences covered by the proposed legislative amendments from all the 46 categories set out in the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance to 37, whether the Government will withdraw the proposed legislative amendments in response to the strong opposition expressed by the 130 000 people who took to the street to join a march last month?

Reply:

President,

The Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019 proposed by the Government aims to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance (FOO) and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance (MLAO) to deal with two practical issues:

First, a homicide case happened in Taiwan in early 2018 involving a Hong Kong resident killing another Hong Kong resident, and the homicide suspect fled to Hong Kong. However, there is at present no legal provision to provide the mutual legal assistance or surrender the fugitive offenders to Taiwan.

Second, it is necessary to simultaneously plug the loopholes in Hong Kong's overall co-operation mechanism in criminal and juridical assistance matters, including the geographical restrictions, i.e. being inapplicable to Mainland China, Macao and Taiwan, and the impractical operational requirements under the existing ordinances.

There is a time issue under the first point because the suspect in the homicide case was sentenced to 29 months of imprisonment for four counts of money laundering and could be released as early as October this year. We hope to enact the legislation before his release so that he can be surrendered to Taiwan for the legal sanction that he deserves. As regards the second point, we have to address the shortcomings and loopholes of our existing mechanism for surrender of fugitive offenders. The Government's proposed amendments, which have been thoroughly and prudently considered, ensure that serious crime offenders cannot elude liability by taking advantage of a legal vacuum while protecting the safety of the public and the society.

My reply to the three parts of Dr Hon Kwok's question is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been communicating with the Taiwan side on its request in a pragmatic and respected manner, without any preconceived condition and with focus on the case itself only.

At present, there is no law in Hong Kong to deal with this serious murder case. So relevant laws must be enacted. We are aware that the Taiwan side has also agreed that the suspect should be brought to justice, and expressed that the door for negotiation on the mutual juridical assistance remains open. Under the mutual consensus that the suspect should face justice, we will continue to communicate with the Taiwan side patiently, explaining our legal vacuum and working hard to push forward the co-operation in the case to uphold justice.

(2) Some legislators proposed amending the Offences Against the Person Ordinance to extend the criminal jurisdiction of the courts of HKSAR, so that the courts may conduct trials for homicide offences committed by Hong Kong people abroad. There are also views suggesting that the Taiwan homicide case should be handled by means of a sunset clause.

First, handling the Taiwan homicide case by amending the Offences Against the Person Ordinance will result in a suspect being punished for an act that was not an offence under Hong Kong laws when it was committed, violating the provisions under Article 12: "No retrospective criminal offences or penalties" of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance. Furthermore, we will also have to remove the geographical restrictions under MLA0 to obtain evidence through co-operation. Even if restrictions are removed under MLA0, given that the crime took place outside Hong Kong, our prosecution authorities will face considerable difficulties in gathering evidence and summoning witnesses, and will not be able to ensure that such evidence will be accepted by Hong Kong courts. This may even give rise to legal problems pertaining to disclosure of information, thereby resulting in challenge for depriving the right of the defendant for fair trial. If he is acquitted in Hong Kong owing to the evidence failing to meet standard of proof, under the rule against double jeopardy, he will not be legally responsible for which he deserves and this situation will be undesirable.

As for handling the Taiwan homicide case by means of a sunset clause, this can only handle a single homicide case, not a second, third or any other future homicide cases and serious criminal cases, which will each entail enactment of new legislation. This proposal is simply unable to plug the loophole in the current surrender mechanism. We cannot and should not turn a blind eye to the loopholes in the current mechanism as this would make Hong Kong a shelter for offenders.

(3) We have undergone careful deliberation in drawing up the legislative proposals. I have just explained clearly the policy objectives, and the Government will not withdraw the bill. The HKSAR Government understands that the public has different views on the proposed legislative amendments, with supports and criticisms. The Government team has been devoured to explain the legislative proposals to the public and listening to the views from different sectors, during which we have come across many people who are not familiar with the provisions of the amendment bill and the actual operation of the regime. To this end, the Government will continue to explain to the public to enhance their understanding of the proposed amendments. On the other hand, having exchanged views and listening to the comments from various sectors of the community, the Government has refined the proposals in order to strike a reasonable balance by specifying the categories of offences to be handled to 37 items, covering those with the most serious or relatively serious nature, involving the upholding of justice and compliance with obligations under international conventions, etc. The considerations for excluding the 9 categories of offences are that they were seldom come across or have never been dealt with in the past surrender requests; as for the computer related offences, they have been shelved owing to the legal definition problem, which was not sorted out at that time.

President, I hope we can go back and stick to the original objective of surrender of fugitives. The United Nations (UN) passed a resolution in 1997, recognising that surrender of fugitives is an effective means in the joint effort against organised crimes and serious offences. The legislative amendments will not change our current regime for surrender of fugitive offenders under the cautious gatekeeping by the Government and the courts. It remains our key policy objective to enter into long-term co-operation agreements with different jurisdictions. Nevertheless, it takes as long as years on average to negotiate a long-term agreement. Should the Bill be passed, we could effectively supplement the inadequacy with case-based arrangement in the absence of a long-term agreement. In the existing F00, we have made reference to the UN model treaty on surrender of fugitives, which is in compliance with the international practice with sufficient human rights and legal procedural safeguards. The concerned individuals have the rights to appeal, apply habeas corpus and file judicial review up to the level of Court of Final Appeal. The proposed case-based surrender arrangement will be no longer applicable once a long-term agreement has been signed. The proposed legislative amendments will definitely not affect any long-term agreements in force.

The freedom and rights of Hong Kong is fully protected under the Basic

Law. The proposed legislative amendments are in line with the Basic Law, and will definitely not affect the existing legal rights and freedom.

Thank you, President.

Results of Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers released

A total of 1 495 candidates sat for the English Language papers in the Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (LPAT) 2019 in January while 1 749 sat for the Putonghua papers.

The results of the assessment are as follows:

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* LPR = Language Proficiency Requirement

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) has sent the results notices to candidates by post. They are expected to reach the candidates tomorrow (May 23). Those who have not received the results by Friday (May 24) should contact the HKEAA on 3628 8860.

The Assessment Reports, which provide the chief examiners' observations on candidates' performance, including their strengths and areas for improvement, will be released in July through the websites of the HKEAA (www.hkeaa.edu.hk) and the Education Bureau (www.edb.gov.hk) for the reference of candidates, schools and teacher education institutions. The question papers, together with a CD for the listening tests, suggested answers and Assessment Reports, will be available for sale in July.

Applications for re-checking of results will be accepted on or before May 29. Candidates will be informed individually of their appeal results by June 27.

Those who intend to attain the LPR in future can do so through assessment and/or exemption. The next calls for applications to sit for LPAT and for applications for exemption will be made in September 2019 and November 2019 respectively. The details will be made available through Education Bureau circular memoranda in the 2019/20 school year.