

## Three illegal workers jailed

Three Vietnamese illegal workers were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (May 15).

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion" on March 28, enforcement officers raided a manicure shop in Shau Kei Wan. Three female Vietnamese illegal workers, aged 28 to 37, were arrested. When intercepted, they were working as manicurists. Upon identity checking, one woman produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration, or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charges and were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are

arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

---

## **Re-opening of Government Secretariat Tender Box**

The Government Secretariat Tender Box (GSTB) located at G/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, Tamar, which was previously closed, has been re-opened to receive tenders for the Central Tender Board.

Tenders must be deposited in the tender box as specified in the tender notice (Specified Tender Box) before the specified tender closing time. Late tenders and tenders not deposited in the Specified Tender Box will not be processed.

For enquiries, please call 2810 2401 between 9am and 6pm from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays).

---

## **Lifesaving services at Lo So Shing Beach resume**

Attention TV/Radio Announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that the lifesaving services at Lo So Shing Beach in Islands District resumed today (May 16). The lifesaving services at the beach were suspended earlier due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty.

---

## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the service demand surge, the Hospital Authority (HA) is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

In addition, the weekly bulletin "Surge in Brief" (annex) will be issued every Thursday to illustrate the past month's trends of key service statistics in public hospitals. "Surge in Brief" can be accessed in the HA Winter Surge designated webpage ([www.ha.org.hk/goto/wintersurge/en](http://www.ha.org.hk/goto/wintersurge/en)).

---

## **FEHD actively follows up on three cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus**

â€œIn response to the announcement by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health yesterday about three cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has immediately taken a series of follow-up actions today (May 15).

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The FEHD has been very concerned about rodent infestation in different districts and has been adopting multi-pronged strategies including improving environmental hygiene, rodent disinfestation and enforcement action to combat rodent problem.

"As regards the districts where the three patients reside, namely Tuen Mun, Southern District and Kowloon City, FEHD officers, together with the staff of the Housing Department and the property management company of the private housing estate, as well as other parties concerned, have already conducted inspections today at the concerned public housing estate, private housing estate and 'three-nil' buildings at the affected location to observe the rodent infestation situation and provide professional advice and technical guidance on prevention and control of rodent infestation, including

stepping up refuse clearing work, proper ways of placing baits and traps, methods of destroying rat holes and improving rodent proofing measures in buildings, so as to strengthen the anti-rodent work.

"In addition, FEHD officers of relevant sections will also carry out joint operations at the districts concerned to enhance street cleansing services, intensify rodent prevention and control work at public places and take prosecution against illegal dumping of refuse.

"FEHD officers will also maintain close liaison with District Councillors and various stakeholders to inspect places which have drawn concern in the districts and organise publicity and educational activities to raise public awareness of rodent prevention and control."

Besides, the FEHD continues to carry out territory-wide anti-rodent work. The FEHD conducts the anti-rodent campaign throughout the territory in two phases annually, during which the department, together with other relevant government departments, will enhance targeted rodent prevention and control work at problematic spots and strengthen education and publicity.

The FEHD also launches the eight-week anti-rodent operations in designated target areas after the two phases of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign. The first round of the anti-rodent operation in designated target areas has commenced on May 6. During the period, apart from strengthening rodent elimination work, FEHD staff has also enhanced street cleansing services and cleansing of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas, including sweeping and washing of streets and rear lanes, emptying and cleaning of litter containers, and clearance of miscellaneous articles and refuse on the streets, in public markets and at hawker bazaars, so as to keep the environment clean. In addition, FEHD officers have also stepped up inspections of food premises, markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets and taken enforcement actions.

Since improper handling of food waste and remnants by food premises can give rise to rodent problems, the FEHD will start a five-week special operation from May 20, to target irregularities of food premises such as food preparation, scullery, improper storage of articles and illegal dumping of refuse at rear lanes (including dumping of bagged refuse in small hours), with a view to further enhancing the awareness of rodent prevention and control among the operators of food premises, by educating them to adopt measures to combat rodent problems and upkeep the hygiene condition of rear lanes as well as taking stringent enforcement action. The FEHD will also step up the cleansing and rodent elimination work at rear lanes, as well as public education and publicity.

The spokesman emphasised that cross sector co-operation is essential to sustaining effective rodent prevention and control. He called on members of the public to support and participate in the anti-rodent work, and to eliminate the three fundamental survival conditions of rodents in their daily life, namely food, harbourage and passages, meaning the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents as well as blockage of their

dispersal routes.

The FEHD will continue to work closely with relevant government departments and organisations, property management companies and different stakeholders, and take concerted and effective anti-rodent actions so as to improve environmental hygiene in districts.