

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illegally imported Chinese soft-shelled turtles and red-eared sliders (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (May 5) seized 216 suspected illegally imported Chinese soft-shelled turtles and 75 red-eared sliders with an estimated market value of about \$30,000 at Lok Ma Chau Control Point.

Customs officers intercepted an incoming private car at Lok Ma Chau Control Point yesterday evening and seized the batch of smuggled Chinese soft-shelled turtles and red-eared sliders from the vehicle compartment. The 54-year-old male driver was arrested.

The batch of suspected illegally imported Chinese soft-shelled turtles and red-eared sliders were handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for follow-up. Investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Chemical Residues) Regulation, any person found guilty of importing food animals without a valid certificate is liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to the Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).





[SDEV begins visit to Beijing \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, started his visit programme in Beijing today (May 6), meeting with officials of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Water Resources to foster closer ties and exchanges with the Mainland authorities.

In the morning, Mr Wong first met with the Director of the China International Development Cooperation Agency, Mr Zhao Gang, to discuss Hong Kong's participation in the Mainland's foreign aid construction projects.

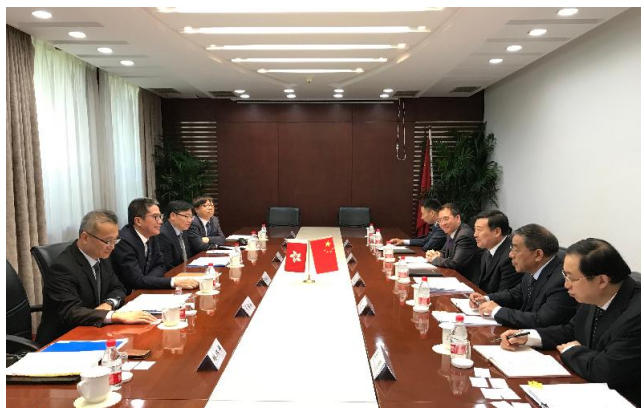
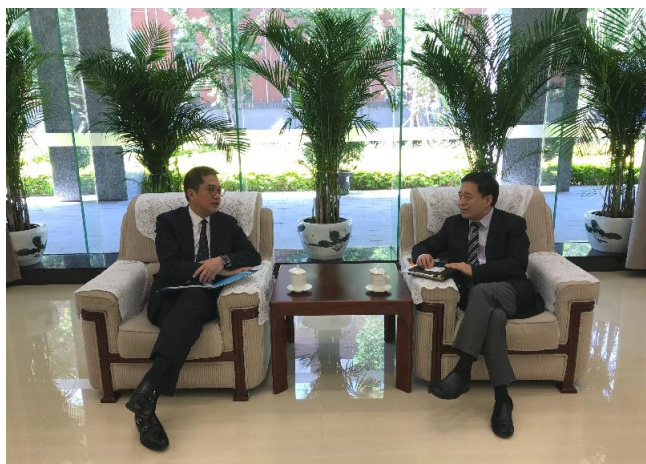
He then had a meeting with the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Mr Ni Hong, to discuss matters relating to mutual recognition of professional qualifications under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), Hong Kong's participation in the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the preparation of next year's Mainland and Hong Kong Construction Forum.

In the afternoon, Mr Wong met with the Deputy Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Mr Wang Qian. They exchanged views on promoting mutual recognition of professional qualifications for planners, and sought to enhance exchanges between professionals of the two places.

Mr Wong also met with the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Water Resources, Mr Jiang Xuguang, to exchange views on water resources management, allocation of Dongjiang river basin water resources, Dongjiang water supply agreements and flood prevention work.

Accompanying Mr Wong on the visit are the Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), Mr Lam Sai-hung, and the Deputy Secretary for Development (Works), Mr Francis Chau.

Mr Wong will call on the Ministry of Commerce and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council tomorrow. He will return to Hong Kong tomorrow night.



[Cancellation of LegCo subcommittee meeting](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The first meeting of the Legislative Council Subcommittee on Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Amendment of Schedule 1) Notice 2019 originally scheduled for tomorrow (May 7) at 9am has been cancelled.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 6) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From April 28 to May 4, three community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A female patient, aged 67 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Sau Ming House, Sau Mau Ping Estate, Kwun Tong;
2. A male patient, aged 61 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block 9, Nice Villa, Hang Tau, Sheung Shui; and
3. A male patient, aged 73 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block 2, Liberte, Sham Shui Po, and has passed away.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of May 4, 22 LD cases had been reported in 2019. In 2018 and 2017, there were 105 and 72 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;

- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises' Credit Conditions for First Quarter 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (May 6) the results of Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for the first quarter of 2019.

Regarding SMEs' perception of banks' credit approval stance relative to six months ago, 81 per cent of respondents perceived similar or easier credit approval stance in the first quarter of 2019, compared with 78 per cent recorded in the previous quarter (Chart 1 in the Annex). 19 per cent of respondents perceived more difficult credit approval stance relative to six months ago in the first quarter of 2019, as compared to 22 per cent in the previous quarter.

Of those respondents with existing credit lines, 90 per cent reported that banks' stance on existing credit lines was easier or unchanged in the first quarter of 2019, up from 84 per cent recorded in the previous quarter (Chart 2 in the Annex). 10 per cent of respondents reported tightened banks' stance on existing credit lines in the first quarter of 2019, as compared to 16 per cent in the previous quarter.

The Survey also gauged the results of new credit applications from SMEs. 1.3 per cent of respondents reported that they had applied for new bank credit during the first quarter of 2019. For respondents who already know their application outcomes, 97 per cent reported fully or partially successful applications, up from 94 per cent in the previous quarter; the proportion of respondents that reported fully successful applications slightly dropped to 55 per cent from 57 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 3 in the Annex). The proportion of respondents that reported unsuccessful application dropped from 6 per cent to 3 per cent. It should be noted that owing to a small sample size (i.e. 1.3 per cent of surveyed SMEs), the results on new credit applications from SMEs could be prone to large fluctuations. Care should be taken when interpreting the survey results.

About Survey on SMEs' Credit Conditions

In light of the importance of SMEs to the Hong Kong economy and concerns about potential funding difficulties facing SMEs over the past few years, the HKMA has appointed the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) to carry out this Survey, starting from the third quarter of 2016. This Survey is conducted on a quarterly basis, covering about 2 500 SMEs from different

economic sectors each time. The results of this Survey can help monitor the development of SMEs' access to bank credit from a demand-side perspective.

The results of this Survey should be interpreted with caution. Similar to other opinion surveys, views collected in this Survey may be affected by changes in sentiment due to idiosyncratic events that occurred over the Survey period, which can make the results prone to fluctuations. Readers are advised to interpret the results together with other economic and financial information. In addition, views collected are limited to the expected direction of inter-quarter changes (e.g. "tighter", "similar" or "easier") without providing information about the magnitude of these changes.

Detailed tables and technical information of this Survey are published on the website of the HKPC (smecc.hkpc.org).