

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning outbreak

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 28) investigating a suspected outbreak of food poisoning affecting 13 persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The patients, comprising four men and nine women aged 28 to 59, developed abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and fever about 19 to 41 hours after having lunch at a restaurant in Aberdeen on February 25.

Five of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation. All affected persons are in a stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Suspicious mobile applications related to Bank of Singapore Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of Singapore Limited on suspicious mobile applications (Apps), which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the Apps concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the Apps should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[Licence of employment agency revoked](#)

A spokesman for the Labour Department (LD) today (February 28) reminded operators of employment agencies (EAs) to conduct their business in compliance with the law and the requirements of the Code of Practice for EAs (the Code) at all times.

The LD has revoked the licence of Unity Employment Limited, an EA located in Mong Kok, which failed to meet the standards set out in the Code, including getting involved in the financial affairs of job seekers, failing to draw up a service agreement with foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) and FDH employers with all required items, failing to issue payment receipts to employers with all required items, failing to provide a copy of the Standard Employment Contract (SEC) partially signed by the employers for their retention, failing to keep records relating to the dealings with job seekers and employers, and failing to keep acknowledgement receipts from FDHs and their employers declaring that they had received the publications and sample forms, and had been briefed about their statutory rights and obligations.

Under section 53(1)(c)(iva) and section 53(1)(c)(v) of the Employment Ordinance (EO), the Commissioner for Labour may revoke the licence of an EA if he is satisfied that the licensee concerned has not complied with the Code and is not a fit and proper person to operate an EA.

The spokesman said, "The Code sets out the salient legal requirements that EA operators must observe in operating their business, as well as the minimum standards which the Commissioner expects of EAs. The Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 which came into effect on February 9, 2018 further empowered the Commissioner to refuse to issue or renew a licence, or to revoke a licence, if the licensee or the person intending to be the licensee, or a related person of or an individual employed by the licensee or the person intending to be the licensee, has contravened Part XII of the EO, such as overcharging job seekers, or if he or she has not complied with the Code."

This is the eighth revocation/refusal of renewal of an EA licence since

2018. Previously, Familia Employment Agency located in Tai Po and My Friends Service Limited located in Tsuen Wan had their licences revoked after the licensees were respectively convicted of overcharging job seekers. Four other EAs, namely Tin Wai Employment Company Limited located in Mong Kok and Tuen Mun, Good Family Employment Agency Company Limited located in Kennedy Town, Galaxy Maid Employment Consultants Limited located in Central and Causeway Bay, and Happy J Employment Agency located in Tsuen Wan, had their licences revoked for the following reasons:

- Tin Wai Employment Company Limited: contravening the Code and providing misleading information during the inspections and enquiries of the LD;
- Good Family Employment Agency Company Limited: contravening the Code by getting involved in the financial affairs of job seekers, failing to issue payment receipts to FDHs, and having the management fail to closely supervise its staff;
- Galaxy Maid Employment Consultants Limited: contravening the Code by failing to include all required items in the service agreements with FDHs and their employers, failing to keep the written confirmations from FDHs and their employers declaring that they had been briefed about their statutory rights and obligations as well as the content of the SEC by the EA, and failing to keep records on the dealings with employers; and
- Happy J Employment Agency: contravening the Code by getting involved in the financial affairs of a job seeker, withholding the passport of the job seeker in order to force her to make payment or repayment to a financial institution, and failing to send a signed copy of the completed SEC to the job seeker as soon as practicable.

Another EA, namely JK Company located in Mong Kok, had its licence renewal refused because its licensee had contravened the Code by failing to draw up service agreements with FDHs and their employers.

For enquiries or complaints about malpractices of EAs, please call the LD's Employment Agencies Administration at 2115 3667, or visit its office at Unit 906, 9/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon.

Planning Department publishes "Northbound Southbound 2017"

The Planning Department today (February 28) released a publication entitled "Northbound Southbound 2017", which presents the results of the Cross-boundary Travel Survey 2017.

The Survey was carried out at 11 boundary control points from November

16 to 29, 2017. During the two-week survey period, daily averages of 720 000 cross-boundary passenger trips (including 666 700 trips between Hong Kong and the Mainland and 53 300 trips between Hong Kong and Macao) and 46 100 vehicle trips between Hong Kong and the Mainland were recorded.

Passenger trips

A daily average of 720 000 cross-boundary passenger trips was recorded during the survey period, representing a growth of 2.6 per cent over that in the 2015 Survey. Among these trips, 92.6 per cent were passenger trips between Hong Kong and the Mainland and the remaining 7.4 per cent were between Hong Kong and Macao.

The 666 700 average daily cross-boundary passenger trips between Hong Kong and the Mainland represented a growth of 2.8 per cent over that in the 2015 Survey. Of these almost half (48 per cent) were made by People Living in Hong Kong. A further 32.5 per cent were made by Visitors from the Mainland, 17.5 per cent were by Hong Kong Residents Living in the Mainland and 2 per cent were by People Living in Other Places.

For trips between Hong Kong and the Mainland made by People Living in Hong Kong, 45.7 per cent were for leisure, followed by visiting relatives and friends (28.8 per cent) and for business (14.4 per cent). Shenzhen remained the most common trip end in the Mainland, accounting for 68.4 per cent of the trips. A daily average of 164 400 trips (51.4 per cent) were same-day trips.

A daily average of 216 600 passenger trips was made by Visitors from the Mainland with 62.7 per cent under the Individual Visit Scheme, including 40.1 per cent using one-entry or two-entry endorsements and 22.6 per cent using "one trip per week" endorsements. Regarding trip purposes, 67.4 per cent of Mainland visitors came to Hong Kong for leisure, 14.3 per cent for visiting relatives and friends and 8.7 per cent for business. A daily average of 125 200 trips (57.8 per cent) were same-day trips.

For trips made by Hong Kong Residents Living in the Mainland, 90.8 per cent of them started from Shenzhen. They mainly travelled to Hong Kong for schooling (45.4 per cent), work (19.8 per cent) and leisure (15.8 per cent). As compared with the 2015 Survey, the number of cross-boundary students increased by 1.8 per cent to 28 280.

Rail-based control points remained the most popular control points with 34.4 per cent using the Lo Wu Control Point and 23.5 per cent using the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point. The proportions of trips using the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and the Lok Ma Chau Control Point were 17.7 per cent and 12.5 per cent respectively.

The Survey found that there were 721 400 frequent cross-boundary travellers who usually travelled at least once a week between Hong Kong and the Mainland during the survey period, representing a decrease of 17.6 per cent when compared with the 2015 Survey. Among all frequent cross-boundary travellers, 61.7 per cent were living in Hong Kong. In particular, 39.2 per

cent of them were frequent leisure trip makers, 21.8 per cent were other frequent trip makers, 19.6 per cent were frequent business trip makers, 15.5 per cent were extended home-leavers (visiting family members/relatives) and 3.9 per cent were cross-boundary workers. The other 38.3 per cent of frequent cross-boundary travellers were living in the Mainland, and among them 46 per cent were frequent leisure trip makers, 17.1 per cent were other frequent trip makers, 10.2 per cent were cross-boundary students, 9.2 per cent were cross-boundary workers, 8.9 per cent were frequent business trip makers and 8.5 per cent were extended home-leavers.

Vehicle trips

In the 2017 Survey, there was a daily average of 46 100 cross-boundary vehicle trips between Hong Kong and the Mainland recorded at the road crossings, representing an increase of 6.8 per cent as compared with that in the 2015 Survey. The number of private car trips increased to a daily average of 20 900 in the 2017 Survey, goods vehicle trips (including container truck trips) rose to 21 300, and shuttle bus trips surged to 800. On the other hand, coach trips dropped slightly to 3 200. Trips by private cars constituted the largest share of vehicle trips (45.3 per cent), followed by goods vehicles (24.4 per cent), container trucks (21.8 per cent) and coaches (6.9 per cent).

About 46 per cent of private car trips used the Lok Ma Chau Control Point. A further 45.2 per cent used the Shenzhen Bay Control Point. For trips made by vehicles carrying goods, 59.2 per cent used the Lok Ma Chau Control Point and 20.2 per cent used the Man Kam To Control Point.

Further information

The Cross-boundary Travel Survey 2017 collected statistical information about the patterns of cross-boundary trips as well as the socio-economic profiles of the trip makers. It provides reference data for bureaux/departments and other stakeholders to better understand cross-boundary travel activities, which is crucial to planning work relating to cross-boundary transport infrastructure, community and tourism-related facilities.

A total of 68 400 passengers and 16 200 drivers were interviewed during the Survey. Due to seasonal fluctuations, the number of average daily cross-boundary trips observed during the two-week period may not be representative of the situation for the whole year. Caution should be exercised in interpreting the apparent changes as compared with previous surveys.

The publication "Northbound Southbound 2017" and statistical tables containing detailed findings from the 2017 and previous Cross-boundary Travel Surveys have been uploaded to the website of the Planning Department (www.pland.gov.hk). Members of the public can access the publication and the tables direct at www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/p_study/comp_s/nbsb2017/index.html.

Suspected case tests negative for MERS-CoV

The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health today (February 28) reported that the suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) pending results yesterday (February 27), upon preliminary testing, tested negative for MERS Coronavirus.