

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (October 9) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Male
Age	25
Affected area involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Queen Mary Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Importer convicted for second time for importing hazardous electronic waste from Shanghai

A local importer, Goodplace Environmental Protection Limited, illegally imported hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from Shanghai and was fined \$15,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (October 9) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO). The company was also fined \$38,000 for importing hazardous e-waste from Shanghai in June last year.

With the assistance of the Customs and Excise Department, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff intercepted an imported container from Shanghai at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in March this year. The container was claimed to contain electronic parts, but upon inspection it was found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising waste flat panel displays (FPDs). The intercepted container was immediately returned to the place of origin. The EPD also notified the relevant department of the Mainland for follow-up and instigated prosecution against the importer in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that dismantled or destroyed FPDs are hazardous e-waste, containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. To protect the environment, the EPD rigorously combats the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste.

The spokesman reminded importers of the waste recycling trade not to illegally import (including import into or transshipment through Hong Kong) or export hazardous waste. According to the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to import or export hazardous waste without obtaining a valid permit beforehand. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

Pig farm owner at Pat Heung in Yuen Long convicted for illegal discharge of livestock waste into watercourse

â€‹The owner of a pig farm at Ma Pau Ling at Lin Fa Tei in Pat Heung, Yuen Long, illegally discharged untreated livestock waste into a nearby watercourse and was fined \$8,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (October 9) for contravening the Waste Disposal (Livestock Waste) Regulations.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) received a complaint from a member of the public in February this year about suspected illegal discharge from a pig farm near Ngau Keng Village. EPD staff conducted an inspection at the location under complaint and found that a large amount of greyish-black wastewater with the odour of pig waste was being discharged from the drainage pipe of a pig farm in Ma Pau Ling, which seriously polluted the Kam Tin River downstream. The analysis results of the two wastewater samples taken by the EPD showed that the concentrations of suspended solids in the samples exceeded the discharge standard by 19 times and 15 times. After gathering sufficient evidence, the EPD subsequently initiated prosecution against the owner of the pig farm in accordance with the regulations and notified the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of the case concerned.

An EPD spokesman said that untreated livestock waste contains high concentrations of excreta and will lead to serious pollution and odour problems if discharged into rivers. According to the Regulations, liquid livestock waste generated by livestock farms must be treated properly in a wastewater treatment facility to meet the statutory requirements before being discharged. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and a daily fine of \$5,000 for a continuing offence.

The spokesman reminded owners and staff members of livestock farms in the New Territories to properly operate treatment facilities for wastewater generated from livestock waste and not to discharge untreated livestock waste into nearby watercourses. The department will continue to conduct surprise inspections to combat any irregularities of livestock farms.

More information about the livestock waste control scheme is available on the EPD's website:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/laws_regulations/enforcement/lwis.html.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, October 9, 2018 is 105.6 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

EPD convictions in September

Thirty-three convictions were recorded in September 2018 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

Seven of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, five were under the Noise Control Ordinance, 20 were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance, and one was under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

The heaviest fine in September was \$58,000, assessed against a company which discharged waste/polluting matter into the water control zone.