

FEHD orders Sham Shui Po siu mei and lo mei shop to suspend business for 30 days

The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene has ordered a siu mei and lo mei shop in Sham Shui Po to suspend business for 30 days as the operator repeatedly breached the Food Business Regulation (FBR) by storing open food improperly on the premises.

The premises, located on the ground floor (front portion) at 1A Wing Lung Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon, was ordered to suspend business from today (September 28) to October 27.

"Between February last year and January this year, six convictions for the above-mentioned breach were recorded against the licensee of the shop. A total fine of \$8,400 was levied by the court and 60 demerit points were registered against the licensee under the department's demerit points system. The contraventions resulted in the cancellation of the licence. The licensee of the shop lodged an appeal to the Licensing Appeals Board, which decided to suspend the license for 30 days instead," a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said.

The spokesman reminded licensees of food premises to comply with the FBR, or their licences could be suspended or cancelled.

Licensed food premises are required to exhibit a sign, at a conspicuous place near the main entrance, indicating that the premises have been licensed. A list of licensed food premises is available on the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/index.html).

Hong Kong Customs steps up inspections for consumer protection during National Day Golden Week period (with photos)

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) launched an operation codenamed "Aurora" today (September 28) to step up patrols for consumer protection during the National Day Golden Week period.

The Deputy Head of the Trade Descriptions Investigation Bureau, Mr Ma Kwong-cho, and the Divisional Commander of the Unfair Trade Practice Investigation Group, Ms Sun Wai-yee, said that during the operation the C&ED would step up patrols at shopping spots, as well as dried seafood and ginseng shops, jewellery shops and other shops in shopping areas such as Yau Ma Tei, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay. The C&ED will also remind retail shops and workers of the tourist industry to abide by the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TD0).

Furthermore, a Quick Response Team of the C&ED will attend to short-stay visitors' urgent cases pertaining to unfair trade practices report.

According to the TD0, any trader who adopts unfair trade practices, including making false trade descriptions in relation to goods and misleading omission, aggressive commercial practices, as well as "bait and switch" practices, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Customs also reminds shoppers that they should have a good understanding of the product specifications before purchase. They should do price comparisons and patronise shops with a good reputation. They are also reminded to check carefully the price and unit of measurement before making payment and retain the receipt after purchase.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182, or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).





CFS announces food safety report for August

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 28) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 15 500 food samples tested were satisfactory except for nine samples which were announced earlier. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 1 700 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, some 4 600 samples were taken for chemical tests and the remaining 9 200 (including about 8 700 taken from food imported from Japan) were collected to test radiation levels.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygienic indicators, while the chemical tests included pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others.

The samples comprised about 4 500 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; 700 samples of meat and poultry and their products; 1 800 samples of aquatic and related products; 900 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; 1 000 samples of cereals, grains and their products; and 6 600 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The nine unsatisfactory samples comprised three vegetable and fruit samples detected with pesticide residues exceeding the legal limits; a dried apricot sample and a preserved leaf mustard sample detected with sulphur dioxide exceeding the legal limits; an eel sample detected with a trace amount of malachite green; a soft ice-cream sample found to contain coliform bacteria exceeding the legal limit; a white rice sample detected with excessive cadmium; and a plum sauce sample found to contain sulphur dioxide

undeclared on its food label.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples, including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

Since the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) came into effect on August 1, 2014, as of August 31 this year, the CFS has taken over 153 900 food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose before harvesting. The maximum residue limits (MRLs) of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

Celebrations to mark 69th National Day

A series of celebration activities will be held in Hong Kong on October 1 (Monday) to mark the 69th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Major activities will include a flag-raising ceremony and a National Day reception in the morning, and a variety show and a fireworks display in the evening.

The flag-raising ceremony will be held at 8am at Golden Bauhinia Square outside the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) in Wan Chai. The Chief Executive will join some 2 400 people at the ceremony including community leaders, senior government officials, and members of uniformed groups and community groups.

The Police Band will perform at the ceremony and a mixed choir from St Paul's Co-educational College, Diocesan Boys' School and Diocesan Girls' School will sing the national anthem under lead singers Apollo Wong and Sandy Leung, followed by a fly-past and a sea parade by the disciplined services.

Members of the public are also welcome to watch the ceremony from a Designated Public Viewing Area with a capacity for about 1 000 viewers. An LED wall will be installed in the area to facilitate viewing of the ceremony. To ensure the smooth running of the flag-raising ceremony, people must remain in their respective areas and observe the regulations and directions given by the authorities on-site.

Hosted by the Chief Executive, the National Day reception will be held after the flag-raising ceremony at the Grand Hall, Level 3, HKCEC. About 4 000 invited guests will attend, including members of the Executive and Legislative Councils, the consular corps, government officials, community group leaders and members of various community sectors.

The two lead singers, the school choir and the Police Band will perform and sing the national anthem at the reception. In addition, there will be an entertainment programme performed by the Hong Kong Dance Federation.

At 7pm, the Organising Committee of Compatriots in Hong Kong in Celebration of the 69th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China will present a variety show at the Hong Kong Coliseum in Hung Hom.

A spectacular fireworks display will start at 9pm at Victoria Harbour to celebrate National Day. It will last about 23 minutes.

People planning to watch the fireworks display on either side of Victoria Harbour are requested to behave in a safe and orderly manner and follow the advice of police officers. They should also pay attention to the special traffic arrangements for the National Day celebration activities announced by the Government.

Statistics on Code on Access to Information for first quarter of 2018

The Government received a total of 1 895 requests for information under the Code on Access to Information in the first quarter of 2018, a spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said today (September 28).

The total number of requests received since the introduction of the Code in March 1995 and up to the end of March 2018 amounted to 63 233. Of these, 3 751 requests were subsequently withdrawn by the requestors and 3 088 requests covered cases in which the bureaux/departments concerned did not hold the requested information. As at March 31, 2018, 277 requests were still being processed by bureaux/departments.

Among the 56 117 requests which covered information held by bureaux/departments and which the bureaux/departments had responded to, 54 779 requests (97.6 per cent) were met, either in full (53 524 requests) or in part (1 255 requests), and 1 338 requests (2.4 per cent) were refused.

Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the response of a bureau/department under the Code may request that the matter be reviewed. He or she may also lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

In the first quarter of 2018, the Ombudsman received 20 complaints relating to requests for information. In this quarter, the Ombudsman concluded 14 complaints, among which three were partially substantiated, four were unsubstantiated, six were settled after inquiries by the Ombudsman, and one was not pursued by the Ombudsman or outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. As at March 31, 2018, the Ombudsman's investigations on 30 complaints were ongoing.

"The Code has provided an effective framework for the public to seek access to information held by the Government," the spokesman said.