

Hong Kong Customs combats illicit activities in Sham Shui Po District (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted an anti-crime operation codenamed "Net One" in Sham Shui Po District from August 1 to yesterday (August 12) and seized suspected illicit cigarettes, suspected infringing goods and a small amount of suspected dangerous drugs with a total estimated market value of about \$680,000.

During the operation, about 90 000 illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$240,000 as well as about 3 000 items of suspected infringing goods including clothing, bags and phone accessories with an estimated market value of about \$440,000 were seized. The small amount of suspected dangerous drugs seized includes cocaine and methamphetamine.

A total of 15 men and 10 women, aged between 29 and 79, were arrested during the operation.

Hong Kong Customs reiterates that it will continue to combat illegal activities on various fronts, including through close contact and timely joint operations with the Police and other law enforcement agencies.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the Copyright Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale an infringing item commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, any person who possesses a dangerous drug commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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



Three illegal workers jailed

Three illegal workers, comprising an Indian, a Pakistani and a Vietnamese, were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts on August 10 and 13.

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Powerplayer" on June 27, enforcement officers raided a recycling shop in Sham Shui Po. A male Indian illegal worker, aged 43, was arrested. When intercepted he was conveying goods. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

During an anti-illegal worker joint operation with the Hong Kong Police Force mounted on August 8, enforcement officers raided a residential building under renovation in Mong Kok. A male Pakistani illegal worker, aged 36, was arrested. When intercepted he was conveying and disposing debris. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

Furthermore, during operation "Twilight" conducted on June 13, ImmD investigators raided a sports ground in Sheung Shui. A male Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 54, was arrested. When intercepted, he was repairing the turf. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on August 10 and 13 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. After trial, they 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 of 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.

[WSD awards consultancy agreement for Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works](#)

[extension \(with photo\)](#)

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) today (August 13) awarded a consultancy agreement for the Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works extension. The scope of the agreement comprises carrying out investigation study, site investigation, design, preparation and assessment of tenders and supervising the construction works of the Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works extension.

The extension project aims to increase the water treatment capacity of Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works from the existing 150 000 cubic metres per day to 300 000 cubic metres per day to cope with the future water demand in North Lantau. The project comprises the extension of Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works and the uprating of the transfer capacity of the associated raw water supply systems. The construction is tentatively scheduled to commence in 2021 for completion in 2025.

Speaking at the contract-signing ceremony today, the Assistant Director (New Works) of the WSD, Mr Luk Wai-hung, said, "With the implementation of this extension project, Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works will continue to provide reliable fresh water supply supporting the sustainable developments in North Lantau."

The consultancy agreement was awarded to Black & Veatch Hong Kong Limited at \$54 million.



[Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 13) 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 August 5 to 11, four community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A female patient, aged 83 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block A, Kiu Kwun Building, 395 King's Road, North Point;
2. A male patient, aged 69 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Wo Tung House, Cheung Wo Court, Kwun Tong;
3. A male patient, aged 73 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Kai Fai House, Choi Wan (II) Estate, Wong Tai Sin; and
4. A male patient, aged 85 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block 10, Flora Plaza, 88 Pak Wo Road, Fanling.

"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 August 11, 55 LD cases have been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 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 these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. 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;
- 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 the 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 medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them 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. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 4. 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.

[SCS visits Civil Engineering and Development Department \(with photo\)](#)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, visited the Civil Engineering and Development Department site office at the Tseung Kwan O Area 137 Fill Bank (TKOFB) today (August 13) to learn more about the work of the

department. He also met with staff of various grades to exchange views on matters of concern.

Accompanied by the Acting Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Brian Lo, Mr Law met with the Director of Civil Engineering and Development, Mr Lam Sai-hung, and the directorate staff to get an update on the department's work in the provision of land and infrastructure, port and marine services, geotechnical services and environmental and sustainability services.

Mr Law then viewed the Fill Bank to see the department's work in public fill management. He was briefed by staff on the procedures for receiving and handling public fill generated from the construction industry. He also toured the tipping hall and the sorting facilities for processing fill to learn about their operation. Mr Law learnt that the TKOFB receives an average of 25 000 tonnes of public fill daily, to be used for reclamation and site formation works and the like.

Before concluding his visit, Mr Law met with staff representatives of various grades at a tea gathering to exchange views on matters that concerned them. He praised colleagues for their efforts and encouraged them to continue to provide high-quality civil engineering services to meet Hong Kong's development needs.

