

Employer fined for violation of safety legislation

Waihong Environmental Services Limited was fined \$50,000 at Shatin Magistrates' Courts today (July 20) for violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on December 22, 2017 in Ma On Shan. While a worker was carrying out refuse collection work on the upper floors of a residential building, he fell into a refuse chute and was stuck inside. He was later certified dead.

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected pangolin scales (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (July 20) seized about 7 100 kilograms of suspected pangolin scales with an estimated market value of about \$3.55 million from a container at the Tsing Yi Cargo Examination Compound.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers inspected a 40-foot container declared to contain plastic materials arriving in Hong Kong from Nigeria. Upon inspection, Customs officers found the suspected pangolin scales in the container.

Investigation is ongoing.

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 Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting an endangered species without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years.

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).



Sample of mushroom imported from Japan in breach of food labelling regulations

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 20) said that a kind of prepackaged mushroom imported from Japan has been found to contain a preservative, sulphur dioxide, that was not declared on the product's food label, in breach of the food labelling regulations. Follow-up is in progress.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Hana Donko (Oitakenshiitake Oitaken Dried Hana Donko Shiitake Mushroom)

Place of origin: Oita Prefecture, Japan

Net content: 100 grams

Best-before date: June 12, 2019

"The CFS took the abovementioned sample from a supermarket in Central for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained a preservative, sulphur dioxide. The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of product. The CFS is also tracing the source of the affected product," a CFS spokesman said.

The spokesman pointed out that although the level of sulphur dioxide contained (24 parts per million) in the abovementioned sample is within the legal limit, susceptible individuals who are allergic to sulphur dioxide may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea if they consume this kind of food.

The spokesman urged the trade to observe the relevant laws and regulations. The Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) require that the food ingredients of all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should be listed out in the list of ingredients. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

The CFS will notify the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

Woman fined for managing unlicensed guesthouse

A woman was fined \$3,000 at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today (July 20) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in December last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a licensed guesthouse on Hop Yick Road in Yuen Long. OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in an unlicensed guesthouse in the same building on a daily basis.

The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 21(3)(b) of the Ordinance for managing a guesthouse in a premises other than the one indicated in the licence.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, an offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Dead pine trees to be removed along

Tolo Highway (Ma Liu Shui Section near Chak Cheung Street) (with photos)

The Highways Department (HyD) will remove some 130 dead pine trees along the Tolo Highway (Ma Liu Shui Section near Chak Cheung Street) starting in early August to protect road users' safety. Tree removal work will be carried out at night and will last about four weeks.

There are approximately 300 pine trees (*Pinus elliottii*) along the four roadside verges and slopes within the expressway boundary. Between late March and early May this year, around 130 pine trees died within a few months, and beetles were found on the tree bark. The HyD, together with the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau, has looked into the possible cause by collecting beetle samples for DNA identification and consulting entomology and tree experts. The test results and experts' advice showed that the beetles are not the cause of tree death and they are not a medium of infestation. The actual cause has yet to be determined.

The pine trees are already dead. With continual decline in their structural stability, they will eventually collapse. In order to ensure road users' safety, the HyD will remove the dead trees. This would also avoid the spread of fungal disease, if any, to other trees in the vicinity.

The Government will examine the soil and dead branches in order to look into the cause of tree death. To restore the visual appeal of the slope landscape and prevent soil erosion, the HyD will replant with shrubs that are resistant to drought, strong wind, dust and harsh sunlight as well as effective in suppressing weed growth, including native and naturalised plant species (e.g. azalea and miniature umbrella plant).



