

FEHD and Police continue to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (September 13) that the FEHD and the Police continued to step up their inspections to take stringent enforcement actions territory-wide against premises operators, staff and customers in bars/pubs, other catering premises and certain other premises that defy the anti-epidemic regulations, through its respective inspections and joint operations, from September 9 till the small hours today. The spokesman said that given the continuous deterioration of recent epidemic situation, enforcement departments will proactively take stringent enforcement actions on an ongoing basis. Premises operators and the public are urged not to defy the law, but to work together to reduce the risk of virus transmission in the community.

The spokesman reminds the parties concerned to strictly comply with the requirements and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (Cap. 599F Regulation), and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Vaccine Pass) Regulation (Cap. 599L) etc., including the requirement on the Red Code and Amber Code under the Vaccine Pass; and customers of catering premises participating in a banquet activity have to comply with the rapid antigen test requirement.

The enforcement figures of the FEHD and the Police for the past four days (September 9 to 12) are as follows:

	Inspections	Prosecution actions initiated against operators of premises	Fixed Penalty Notices issued to patrons or staff of premises
Bars/pubs	92	5	49
Other catering premises	2 056	23	28

Moreover, the FEHD and the Police also required the premises to take corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission. Premises found with irregularities had to, on the subsequent day of being identified of the irregularities by the enforcement officers, cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, and allow no more than two persons to be seated together at one table, for a period of three, seven or 14 days or closure of the premises for seven

or 14 days. The details of the case numbers are as follows:

To take corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission or closure of premises	Bars/pubs	Other catering premises
No evening dine-in and restriction of two persons per table for three days	Not applicable	3
No evening dine-in and restriction of two persons per table for seven days	Not applicable	7
No evening dine-in and restriction of two persons per table for 14 days	Not applicable	13
Closure of the premises for seven days	1	Not applicable
Closure of the premises for 14 days	3	Not applicable

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business contravenes the Cap. 599F Regulation or the requirements and directions of the Vaccine Pass, he or she is liable to be prosecuted and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who are present at catering premises or other specified premises must comply with directions applicable to them. Non-compliance with the relevant directions is an offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000, or the liability may be discharged by paying a fixed penalty of \$5,000. In addition, for customers in breach of the requirement on the maximum number of persons per table within catering premises, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). For persons not wearing a mask when they are not eating or drinking at a table therein, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I).ã€€

To reduce the risk of virus transmission in the community, the spokesman strongly appeals to all sectors of the community again to stay vigilant and comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner. The FEHD has strengthened its publicity efforts and will continue to take stringent enforcement actions. All sectors are reminded to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together.

[CS signs condolence book to express condolences on passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of United Kingdom](#)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, visited the

British Consulate-General in Hong Kong today (September 13) to sign the condolence book to express profound condolences on the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom on behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 0.00am today (September 13), a total of 2 885 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are currently hospitalised for treatment, including 343 new patients. Among the patients staying in isolation facilities, 528 patients are in isolation wards, 203 patients are in second-tier isolation wards, 567 patients are in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre and 205 patients are in the Treatment Centre for COVID-19 (AsiaWorld-Expo), of which 236 in total are new patients. There are five newly reported critical patients and five newly reported serious patients. There are a total of 52 patients in critical condition and 61 are in serious condition, of which 13 critical patients are receiving intensive care. Moreover, there are 202 patients who have recovered, including 172 patients who have been discharged. In addition, 10 patients who passed away in public hospitals were reported.

In the fifth wave of the epidemic, there are 67 059 patients who have recovered so far, including 66 720 patients who have been discharged. And since early 2020, there are 79 439 patients who have recovered, including 79 100 patients who have been discharged.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 934 cases tested positive by nucleic acid

tests and 5 133 cases by RATs as well as 151 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (September 13) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, September 13, the CHP was investigating 7 067 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 934 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (897 confirmed cases, 869 asymptomatic cases and 168 cases with pending status) and 5 133 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 151 additional imported cases were reported, including 137 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (14 confirmed cases, 89 asymptomatic cases and 34 cases with pending status) and 14 cases that tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 923 168 and 743 962 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations of the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

Among the specimens received by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch during September 4 to 10 for verification testing of local cases, about 4.8 per cent and 73.8 per cent of them (seven-day moving average) are related to the sub-lineages BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 (including suspected cases) of the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, September 13, a total of 9 607 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 524 and 80 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as three deaths reported from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Centre. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 9 820 death cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (September 12), the total number of confirmed cases was 401 031, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 279 678, 31 and 240 357 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the local situation of COVID-19 infection is severe, with the number of cases tested positive growing at an increased pace. The CHP strongly appeals to the community to strictly comply with social distancing measures and refrain from participating in unnecessary

or crowded activities or mass gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The spokesman said that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients, children, and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.

The spokesman reminded members of the public that they can call various hotlines to make enquiries on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html#hotline).

Prepackaged dried longan sample in breach of food labelling regulation

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (September 13) that a sample of prepackaged dried longan was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is allowed to be used in certain foods, but the functional class and the name of the additive were not declared on the food label. Members of the public should not consume the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Dried longan
Brand: O'Farm
Net weight: 250 grams
Place of origin: Thailand
Agent: Healfront Limited
Best-before date: February 10, 2024

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from an online retail outlet for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide. Although the sulphur dioxide level is below the maximum permitted level under the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD), the functional class and the name of the additive were not declared on the food label," a CFS spokesman said.

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and

instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. According to the CFS's instructions, the agent concerned has initiated a recall on the affected batch of the product. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2111 9787 during office hours for enquiries about the recall of the product concerned," the spokesman added.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products. Sulphur dioxide is water soluble, and most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headaches and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD). Furthermore, the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) require that prepackaged food shall be legibly marked or labelled with a list of ingredients. The regulations also state that for all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong containing sulphite in a concentration of 10 parts per million or more, the functional class of the sulphite and its name shall be specified in the list of ingredients. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

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