

CSSA caseload for October 2024

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in October showed a drop of 536 cases, representing a decrease of 0.3 per cent compared with that of September, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (November 18).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of October stood at 196 477 (see attached table), with a total of 264 887 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, single parent cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 0.9 per cent to 19 382 cases. Unemployment cases dropped by 0.6 per cent to 16 357 cases. Ill-health cases, permanent disability cases and low-earnings cases all decreased by 0.4 per cent to 27 862 cases, 16 875 cases and 1 420 cases respectively. Old age cases declined by 0.1 per cent to 110 659 cases.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 18) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From November 10 to 16, the CHP recorded two community-acquired LD cases:

1. A male patient, aged 76 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Southern District; and
2. A male patient, aged 74 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Yuen Long District.

"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 November 16, 110 LD cases had been recorded this year. In 2023 and 2022, there were 121 and 80 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; 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 that support breathing. People may become 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; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. 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 consumption;
- 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 microorganisms. 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 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 doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device 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 in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
5. 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.

[Speech by Acting CE at Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference 2024 \(English only\) \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference 2024 today (November 18):

Vice Minister Fu Xuyin (Vice Minister of Transport), Dr Peter Lam (Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council), distinguished guests from around the world, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am pleased to welcome you to the 14th Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference – the largest supply-chain management conference in Asia. And I am delighted to note that this year's two-day global gathering is expected to attract some 2 000 professionals from more than 30 countries and regions.

Hong Kong has long been a key player in the global logistics chain. And we are determined to build on our logistics heritage.

Thanks to the National 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong has the country's full support to develop as an international shipping and aviation centre – and, no less important, to boost our global standing as a financial and trade hub.

Hong Kong's aviation strength is built on our world-class infrastructure, extensive air network and excellent connectivity within the Greater Bay Area. Indeed, Hong Kong International Airport is connected to nearly 200 destinations worldwide and has topped the world for air cargo throughput in nine of the past 10 years. It helps, too, that about half the world's population is within five hours' flight time of Hong Kong.

This year, I am delighted to say, Hong Kong International Airport enters the era of the Three-runway System, which is set for commissioning in about 10 days. It will be a game changer. By 2035, the airport will be able to handle up to 120 million passengers and 10 million tonnes of cargo a year.

More good news. Internationally recognised logistics companies are turning to Hong Kong International Airport for their future. United Parcel Service will develop a new hub facility at the airport. That follows last year's launch of DHL's expanded Central Asia Hub and the Cainiao Smart Gateway.

These and other developments will also enhance our cargo connectivity with the Greater Bay Area, boosting our status as an air cargo transshipment centre.

And we will continue to expand our air network, strengthening co-operation with civil aviation partners and supporting airlines to elevate their services on major routes and to explore new destinations, particularly in Belt and Road countries.

This week, of course, is Maritime Week. And we have plenty to celebrate, thanks to Hong Kong Port and our superb connectivity with ports around the world.

The Hong Kong Shipping Registry, let me add, is the fourth largest in the world in gross tonnage.

Hong Kong boasts a dynamic maritime services cluster, counting more than 1 100 companies and providing solid support for the industry. And we are committed to expanding our high-end maritime service offerings, as last month's Policy Address underlined.

Hong Kong ranked fourth in this year's International Shipping Centre Development Index, a testament to our strengths as an international maritime centre.

And we see long-term opportunities in Hong Kong's rise as a green and smart port. Our Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy outlines that promising future, including building green fuel-bunkering capabilities. Just three days ago, we published an action plan on developing Hong Kong into a green maritime fuel-bunkering centre.

A port community system will be up and running next year, enabling the flow and sharing of data within the industry.

Combining our aviation and maritime strengths, Hong Kong has long been a

major cargo gateway to and from the Greater Bay Area.

And the Government is committed to sustaining Hong Kong's standing as a regional logistics hub. The Action Plan on Modern Logistics Development published in October 2023 will guide our way, helping the industry capitalise on the far-reaching opportunities made possible by e-commerce and smart and green logistics.

The Government will encourage transshipment, extending arrangements under the Air Transshipment Cargo Exemption Scheme to other cargo-transshipment options. That will enlarge our cargo catchment area, increasing cargo throughput and boosting our competitiveness as a transshipment hub.

We will also step up efforts to develop Hong Kong into a cross-boundary, e-commerce logistics and distribution centre.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year's Asian Logistics, Maritime and Aviation Conference is all about creating a resilient and sustainable future for global supply chains. And Hong Kong is determined to play a vital part in that promising future.

My thanks to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council for organising this year's conference with us. I am grateful, too, for the support of our partners and sponsors in making this year's conference a resounding success.

I wish you all a rewarding and enjoyable stay here in Hong Kong, and the best in business and logistics in the coming year.

Thank you.



[Import of poultry meat and products from Kern County of State of](#)

California in US suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (November 18) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Kern County of the State of California in the United States (US), the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 63 470 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 17.2 million poultry eggs from the US in the first nine months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the American authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for August – October 2024

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for August – October 2024) released today (November 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 3.0% in July – September 2024 to 3.1% in August – October 2024. The underemployment rate decreased from 1.2% in July – September 2024 to 1.1% in August – October 2024.

Comparing August – October 2024 with July – September 2024, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) increased across most major economic sectors, with more distinct increases observed in the cleaning and similar activities sector; arts, entertainment and recreation sector; and transportation sector. As to the underemployment rate, decreases were mainly seen in the construction sector; and warehousing and support activities for transportation sector.

Total employment decreased by around 3 100 from 3 710 200 in July – September 2024 to 3 707 100 in August – October 2024. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 2 200 from 3 830 100 to 3 827 900.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by

around 800 from 119 900 in July – September 2024 to 120 700 in August – October 2024. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons decreased by around 3 700 from 46 000 to 42 300.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed low at 3.1% in August – October 2024, though edging up by 0.1 percentage point from July – September 2024. The underemployment rate declined slightly by 0.1 percentage point to 1.1%. The labour force and total employment decreased slightly, by 2 200 and 3 100 to 3 827 900 and 3 707 100 respectively. The number of unemployed persons increased slightly by 800 to 120 700."

Among the different sectors, more notable increases in the unemployment rates were seen in the cleaning and similar activities sector; the arts, entertainment and recreation sector; and the transportation sector. On the other hand, the unemployment rates of the retail sector and the food and beverage service activities sector eased back slightly. The unemployment rate of the construction sector stayed unchanged.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "The labour market should remain tight in the near term alongside the continued economic growth, though the employment situation may continue to vary across sectors depending on their business performances."

In August – October 2024, the Labour Department (LD) recorded a monthly average of 62 131 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year decrease of 36.7% and a decrease of 6.2% over the average figure in July – September 2024.

Job seekers may make use of LD's online platforms, such as the Interactive Employment Service website, for obtaining more information on available vacancies.

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc.) and unpaid family workers. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for August – October 2024 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 68 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong. Labour

force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving three-month period of August to October 2024.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode200.html). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the report contains statistics for the quarter April – June 2024 while the next issue covering the quarter July – September 2024 will be available by end November 2024. Users can also browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).