

Two co-owners fined about \$70,000 in total for not complying with removal order

Two co-owners were convicted and fined about \$70,000 in total at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts last month for failing to comply with a removal order issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123).

The case involved some unauthorised structures with a total area of about 40 square metres on the roof of a composite building on Boundary Street, Kowloon. The roof is co-owned by two owners. As the unauthorised building works (UBWs) were carried out without the prior approval and consent from the Buildings Department (BD), a removal order was served on the owners under section 24(1) of the BO.

Failing to comply with the removal order, the two owners were prosecuted by the BD and were fined a total of \$69,680, of which \$61,680 was the fine for the number of days that the offence continued, upon conviction at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts on May 22.

A spokesman for the BD said today (June 4), "UBWs may lead to serious consequences. Owners must comply with the removal orders without delay. The BD will continue to take enforcement action against owners who have failed to comply with removal orders, including instigation of prosecution, to ensure building and public safety."

Failure to comply with a removal order without reasonable excuse is a serious offence under the BO. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$200,000 and one year's imprisonment, and a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence continues.

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (June 4) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach in Islands District; and Silverstrand Beach in Sai

Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Red flag hoisted at Silver Mine Bay Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (June 4) that according to the Beach Water Quality Forecast System of the Environmental Protection Department, the Beach Water Quality Forecast Index of Silver Mine Bay Beach in Islands District is 4, which means the water quality is "Very Poor". The red flag has been hoisted and beachgoers are advised not to enter the water to safeguard their health.

Commissioner for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area visits Zhongshan (with photos)

The Commissioner for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Ms Maisie Chan, visited Zhongshan today (June 3) to meet with leaders of the Zhongshan Municipal Government and attend the Symposium for Promoting the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Zhongshan). She also visited a Hong Kong-invested pharmaceutical enterprise there.

Upon arrival in the morning, Ms Chan met with member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China Zhongshan Municipal Committee and Vice Mayor of Zhongshan, Mr Ye Hongguang, to learn about the latest development of Zhongshan and exchange views on deepening co-operation between Hong Kong and Zhongshan to jointly promote the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In the afternoon, Ms Chan attended the Symposium for Promoting the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Zhongshan) to explore with the participating government officials and business leaders the significant opportunities brought about by Greater Bay Area development to Hong Kong and Zhongshan. The Symposium was co-organised by the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Promotion Centre of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, the Office of the Leading Group for the Development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area of Zhongshan Municipality of Guangdong Province, and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Bureau of Zhongshan Municipality of Guangdong Province.

Speaking at the Symposium, Ms Chan said that since the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in 2018 and the implementation of "Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles" Scheme in July last year, the travelling time between Hong Kong and Zhongshan has been significantly reduced, which has fostered the flow of people and deepened co-operation between the two places. With the imminent commissioning of the Shenzhen-Zhongshan Link and the completion of the new Zhongshan ferry terminal, passengers can travel between Hong Kong and Zhongshan within an hour whether by land or by sea, which will further facilitate Hong Kong people's pursuit of starting business, working and living in Zhongshan. This is also of great significance in developing a "one-hour living circle" among major cities of the Greater Bay Area. There will also be closer exchanges and integration between Hong Kong and Zhongshan in various economic, social and cultural aspects in the future.

Ms Chan said that under "one country, two systems", Hong Kong enjoys the unique position of having the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world. In particular, Hong Kong enjoys distinctive advantages in various professional fields including finance, innovation and technology, commerce and trade, intellectual property, legal, accounting, engineering, etc. Hong Kong and Zhongshan can achieve complementarity and co-ordinated development, leveraging Hong Kong's dual roles in "going global and attracting foreign investment". Ms Chan also encouraged talents and enterprises in Zhongshan to seek new directions, expand new businesses and tap into new markets through Hong Kong, and enhance the development of related industries in the two places to achieve complementarity and mutual benefits.

The Symposium has attracted about 2 400 guests, including government officials, representatives of trade associations, industry leaders and start-up entrepreneurs from Hong Kong and Zhongshan. Participants also had in-depth exchanges about the business and investment environment, policies on employment and entrepreneurship, as well as talent policies of Hong Kong and Zhongshan.

Ms Chan then visited a large-scale Hong Kong-invested pharmaceutical enterprise to learn about the operation and latest development of the pharmaceutical industry in the Mainland. The enterprise benefited from the integration and development of the pharmaceutical industry in the Greater Bay Area and has been breaking new ground of "Hong Kong pharmaceuticals produced

in Guangdong". She encouraged Hong Kong enterprises to capitalise on the business opportunities brought about by the enormous market of the Greater Bay Area and to contribute actively to the development of the Area.



Government responds to media reports on seasonal influenza vaccines

In response to media reports on the use of seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV), a spokesman for the Department of Health (DH) today (June 3) stressed that the Government has all along been committed in encouraging members of the public to receive SIV, and has made arrangement to facilitate members of the public (including school children) to receive SIV through various SIV programmes. Given the potential immunisation gap in children due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government has expanded the eligibility of the SIV programmes, from young children and primary students to persons aged 12 to 18 since the 2022/23 SIV season, meaning that the vaccination programme has covered all children and adolescents aged below 18 years. Currently, over 1.86 million doses of SIV had been administered under various SIV programmes in the 2023/24 season, representing an increase of 20 per cent comparing with the same period last year, reaching a record high.

School Outreach Vaccination Services

To enhance the vaccination rate of schoolchildren and to assist in arranging outreach vaccination services by schools, the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination School Outreach (Free of Charge) Programme was launched in 2018/19 and has been regularised since 2020/21. The Programme covers all the kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in the territory. The Government arranges for a Public-Private-Partnership Team or a Government Outreach Team to provide free SIV service for schoolchildren at participating schools. Schools not participating in the above free-of-charge programme can invite doctors providing outreach vaccination under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme from the list published on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website to arrange outreach SIV service at their campus under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme School Outreach (Extra Charge Allowed). For the current SIV season, around 350 secondary schools, around 630 primary schools and around 890 kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and child care centres have enrolled in the above two programmes, accounting for about 70, 95 and 80 per cent of the schools concerned across the territory respectively.

With the DH's publicity effort, the number of students receiving SIV in 2023/24 has significantly increased compared to last year. As at June 2, under the Government Vaccination Programme, about 538 200 doses of SIV have been administered for children aged between 6 months and below 18 years of age, reaching a record high and increased by about 36.9 per cent comparing to last year. The overall vaccine coverage rate has reached 52.9 per cent, which has marked an increase of 13.1 per cent for the same period last year (39.8 per cent).

Arrangement and limitation of live attenuated influenza vaccine (i.e. nasal vaccine) (LAIV)

According to recommendations of the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the CHP of the DH, overseas research and clinical experience generally showed that both injectable inactivated influenza vaccines (IIV) and nasal LAIV are safe and both vaccines can offer comparable protection to the receivers. There is no scientific evidence supporting the priority use of nasal LAIV thus far. The DH has been conducting annual survey to gather feedback from enrolled doctors and schools in the school outreach programmes so as to make reference to the preference of participating schools (including receiving injectable IIV or nasal LAIV) when procuring vaccines.

According to the current arrangement under the SIV School Outreach (Free of Charge) Programme, kindergarten and child care centres can choose to receive injectable IIV or nasal LAIV. Sufficient vaccines have been provided to those kindergartens and child care centres which chose nasal LAIV.

Also, kindergarten, child care centres, primary and secondary schools can discuss with outreach doctors on the provision of injectable IIV or nasal LAIV during the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme School Outreach (Extra Charge Allowed) activities. Parents can also arrange subsidised SIV at clinics of private doctors under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) for children and adolescents aged six months to less than 18 years. Private doctors enrolled in the VSS can also decide to use injectable IIV or nasal LAIV.

In fact, only about a quarter of the kindergartens and child care centres participated in the SIV School Outreach (Free of Charge) Programme chose to use nasal LAIV. Based on past experience, the schools and healthcare providers participating in the outreach program will consider factors such as parental preference, side effects and contraindications of influenza vaccines when selecting the vaccines provided for outreach vaccination activities.

The spokesman reiterated that persons suitable for receiving IIV and LAIV vaccine are different. There are more restrictions for receiving nasal spray vaccines with more points to note, and the shelf-life is also shorter. Nasal LAIV are not applicable to persons who are pregnant, immunocompromised or with other contraindications, e.g. children 2 years through 4 years who have asthma or who have had a history of wheezing in the past 12 months; and concomitant aspirin or salicylate-containing therapy in children and adolescents.

The seasonal influenza vaccines for this season will be expired starting from July this year and the 2024/25 SIV programmes is expected to start in September. The DH will formulate the implementation details for the 2024/25 season, including the best mode of operation and types of vaccine to be provided, with reference to survey results against schools and doctors participating in the school outreach programmes of 2024, and latest recommendations and experience of SCVPD and health authorities of other areas.