

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on May 20 to noon today (May 21), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 160 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 52 823 samples of food imported from Japan (including 34 175 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 13 436 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Care centres remain open

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals:

"The Social Welfare Department announces that while the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, all child care centres, centres providing after-school care programmes, elderly services centres and day rehabilitation units including sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, integrated vocational training centres and day activity centres will remain open during their normal operating hours. If necessary, members of the public can contact the centres to make arrangements for the safe return home of their children and family members."

HAD's Emergency Co-ordination Centre in operation

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, the Home Affairs Department's Emergency Co-ordination Centre is now in operation.

The Home Affairs Department will open temporary shelters for people in need of temporary accommodation.

For details, please contact the centre on 2572 8427.

15 building plans approved in March

The Buildings Department approved 15 building plans in March, with four on Hong Kong Island, two in Kowloon and nine in the New Territories.

Of the approved plans, four were for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, four were for commercial developments, two were for factory and industrial developments, and five were for community services development.

In the same month, consent was given for works to start on six building projects which, when completed, will provide 57 290 square metres of gross floor area for domestic use involving 1 070 units, and 24 103 sq m of gross floor area for non-domestic use. The department has received notification of commencement of superstructure works for four building projects.

The department also issued 23 occupation permits, with eight on Hong Kong Island, four in Kowloon and 11 in the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation, the gross floor area for domestic use was 185 842 sq m involving 2 829 units, and 138 997 sq m was for non-domestic use.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in March totalled about \$15 billion.

In addition, 11 demolition consents involving 11 building structures were issued.

The department received 2 256 reports about unauthorised building works (UBWs) in March and issued 987 removal orders on UBWs.

The full version of the Monthly Digest for March can be viewed on the Buildings Department's homepage (www.bd.gov.hk).

Schools advised to implement contingency plan under rainstorm warning

Attention TV and radio duty announcers:

Please broadcast the following special announcement by the Education Bureau concerning schools, and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal is now in force, schools should implement contingency measures to ensure the safety of students. Schools which are in session should continue until the end of school hours. They should ensure that conditions are safe before allowing students to return home.