

Six persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operation (with photos)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted an anti-illegal worker operation in Tai Po District today (May 6). During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided premises under renovation in a newly built public housing estate. A total of five suspected illegal workers and one suspected employer were arrested. The arrested suspected illegal workers comprise five men, aged 34 to 47. Furthermore, one man, aged 51, suspected of employing the illegal worker, was also arrested.

Apart from mounting the enforcement operation, ImmD officers and a promotional vehicle have been deployed to distribute "Don't Employ Illegal Workers" leaflets and convey the message in the estate.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him/her shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, "As stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land is prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment."

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect

the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman would like to remind all employers not to defy the law by employing illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct an initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.



[Bottled malt vinegar sample in breach of food labelling regulation](#)

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 6) that a sample of bottled malt vinegar 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: Malt VINEGAR
Brand: SARSON's
Place of origin: United Kingdom
Volume: 568 millilitre
Best-before date: December 31, 2025
Distributor: The Dairy Farm Company Limited

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a supermarket in Ho Man Tin 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 of the sample," a spokesman for the CFS said.

"The CFS has informed the distributor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. The distributor concerned has initiated a recall according to the CFS's instructions. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2299 3966 during office hours for enquiries about the recall," the spokesman added.

Sulphur dioxide is a preservative which can be used 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 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. An investigation is ongoing.

[LegCo Panel on Welfare Services visits Sham Shui Po Community Living Room](#)

(with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services visited the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room (Community Living Room) today (May 6) to learn more about its facilities, services and operation.

Members first received a briefing by the representatives of the Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon. They learnt that the Community Living Room aims to provide additional living space for grass-roots families, broaden their interpersonal networks and improve their living standard.

Members then visited the facilities provided there, including the interview room, reading room and study room, children's corner, self-service laundry and shower, as well as dining room. Members also exchanged views with beneficiary households to understand their utilisation of the facilities such as the communal living room and pantry. Members noted that the Community Living Room also provides various support services to needy families, such as referral to community services, talks, health checks and volunteer services, in a bid to improve their quality of life and enhance their sense of belonging to the community.

Members who joined the visit were the Chairman of the Panel, Revd Canon Peter Douglas Koon; the Deputy Chairman, Ms Doreen Kong; Panel members Mr Michael Tien, Mr Andrew Lam, Mr Kenneth Leung, Mr Chan Pui-leung, Dr Ngan Man-yu; as well as non-Panel members Dr Junius Ho.





[One more Land Sharing Pilot Scheme application received before deadline](#)

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (May 6) the receipt of one more application under the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme (LSPS), before the end of the application period (i.e. May 5).

The application concerns a site at Fung Ka Wai, Ping Shan, Yuen Long, covering about 3.1 hectares of private lots and adjoining government land, currently zoned "Recreation" and "Village Type Development". The application proposes for about 1 500 public housing/Starter Homes units (the exact choice of subsidised housing type to be determined by the Government), about 700 private housing flats and supporting facilities, with a total domestic gross floor area of about 117 400 square metres. The application is made by Brasilia Limited (parent company is Lee On Investment (Holdings) Limited).

Same with the applications received previously, the Land Sharing Office (LSO) under the DEVB will co-ordinate with the departments concerned to facilitate and expedite the processing and vetting of the application.

The LSPS was launched in May 2020 for three years originally. As announced in May 2023, the application period was extended by one year to May 5 this year. Including the aforesaid latest application, a total of seven applications have been received under the LSPS. Their key information and proposed development parameters have been uploaded to the LSPS webpage at (www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/land_sharing_pilot_scheme/land_sharing_pilot_scheme_applications/application_received/index.html) with the latest progress for public reference.

For the six applications received earlier, they have all been given in-principle endorsement by the Government. The applicants have been carrying out in-depth technical assessments in order to finalise the development schemes and parameters, and to complete the feasibility assessment in terms of traffic impact, environmental impact and infrastructure design, etc for

subsequent statutory and administrative procedures including planning, works, and lease modification. Statutory rezoning procedures for these projects would commence progressively from the second quarter this year.

A spokesperson for the DEVB said, "The LSPS has achieved its objective of encouraging land owners to share their private land with a view to increasing both the public and private housing supply in the short to medium term. Including the last application just received, the seven applications covering a total area of about 43 hectares, provide a total of more than 32 000 flats, including about 23 300 public housing units. With the Government-led efforts in land creation starting to deliver results, the need to increase the housing supply through the LSPS, with pre-set development parameters on housing yield and housing mix, has already subsided. Hence, the application period of the LSPS closed yesterday (i.e. May 5) in accordance with the announcement in early May last year. Of course, owners of private land are always welcome to pursue gainful use of their land for development subject to fulfilment of statutory planning process and lease modifications."

The spokesperson continued, "We are very grateful to the land owners who have participated in the LSPS for taking practical actions to support the Government's multipronged approach to boost the housing supply. The LSO will continue to provide facilitation to the six applications with in-principle endorsement given by the Government, and process the newly received application for early completion of the projects."

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (May 6) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza. The CHP appealed to members of the public to receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves during the influenza season.

The case involves a 6-year-old boy with good past health. He developed a fever and a runny nose on May 4 and sought medical attention from a private doctor on the same day. He was taken to Prince of Wales Hospital today for medical attention due to the worsening of symptoms and was admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit. His respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. He is now in critical condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had not received

SIV for this season and had no travel history during the incubation period. One of his home contacts is currently symptomatic. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. SIV is one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as reducing influenza-related hospitalisation and death. SIV is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive SIV early. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, members of the public are advised to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#)."

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. It is important to receive both SIV and COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible, in particular for children and elderly persons residing in the community or residential care homes. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), wear a surgical mask when visiting public places. The public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

â€‹The public may visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.