

Bottled drinking water imported from Japan suspected to exceed WHO's guideline value

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (February 22) noted that since a batch of bottled drinking water imported from Japan was found with excessive bromic acid, the following products concerned were recalled by the concerned vendor for the sake of prudence. The CFS is following up on the incident.

Product details are as follows:

(1)Product name: Natural Mineral Water
Brand: Muji
Place of origin: Japan
Packing: 330 millilitres per bottle
Expiry dates: on or before February 7, 2020

(2)Product name: Natural Mineral Water
Brand: Muji
Place of origin: Japan
Packing: 500 millilitres per bottle
Expiry dates: on or before January 25, 2020

(3)Product name: Sparkling Water
Brand: Muji
Place of origin: Japan
Packing: 430 millilitres per bottle
Expiry dates: on or before July 26, 2019

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS received a notification from MUJI (Hong Kong) Company Limited that bromic acid was detected in some of the drinking water products at a level exceeding 0.01 part per million per litre. For the sake of prudence, the vendor has voluntarily stopped sale of and removed from shelves the abovementioned products, and initiated a recall. Members of the public may call the vendor's hotline at 2694 9309 during office hours for enquiries about the recall."

"Bromate is the ionic form of bromic acid in aqueous solution. In the Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality of the World Health Organisation (WHO), a guideline value of 0.01 part per million per litre is set for bromate. The bromate in drinking water is formed during ozonation process of water. If a large amount of bromate is consumed, people may experience gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. It may also affect the kidney and nervous system in severe cases. Although there is evidence suggesting that bromate can cause cancer in animals, there is not yet sufficient data confirming that it can cause cancer in humans." the spokesman

added.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will continue to follow up and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.