

CFS urges public not to consume batch of imported soda water suspected to contain bromate

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (April 16) urged public not to consume a batch of bottled soda water imported from Thailand which was suspected to contain bromate. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Soda Water
Brand: Chang
Place of origin: Thailand
Manufacturer: Cosmos Brewery (Thailand) Co Ltd
Importer: Best Spirits Co Ltd
Volume: 325 millilitres per bottle
Best before date: January 23, 2021

"The CFS, through its Food Incident Surveillance System, noted a notice issued by the Macau authorities concerned that the abovementioned soda water product re-exported from Hong Kong contained bromate at a level exceeding the safety standard of Macau and its sale had to be stopped," a CFS spokesman said.

The CFS immediately contacted major local importers and retailers for follow-up. Preliminary investigations revealed that an importer, Best Spirits Co Ltd, had imported 2 800 cartons of the affected batch of the product, with some 100 cartons re-exported to Macau, and the remaining distributed in Hong Kong. The importer concerned has initiated a recall of the affected batch of product according to CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call the importer's hotline 2378 2563 or 2378 2561 during office hours for enquiries about the recall. The CFS is tracing the distribution of the product.

"Bromate is the ionic form of bromic acid in aqueous solution. 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 alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.