

Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (June 8) the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) (Amendment) Regulation 2018 to stipulate the updated standards for metallic contamination in food.

A Government spokesman said, "The amendments are to enhance the protection of public health, facilitate effective regulation and align Hong Kong's standards with the international ones.

"The standards as set out in the Amendment Regulation were made after making reference to factors including the latest standards on metallic contamination of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, relevant standards of other economies, local food consumption patterns and dietary practices and the results of risk assessment."

The Amendment Regulation will increase the total number of metallic contaminants from the existing seven to 14. The number of maximum levels (MLs) for metallic contaminants in respect of different foods and food groups will be increased from the existing 19 to 144. The Amendment Regulation also provides definitions for individual foods and food groups, replaces or deletes obsolete clauses, and provides the principles for the application of MLs on food in a dried, dehydrated or concentrated form and on compounded food. There are transitional provisions in the Amendment Regulation to provide different grace periods for different kinds of food.

"Given that the proposed MLs are generally in line with Codex's standards and the principles for establishing MLs for contaminants in food, the amendments are not likely to affect the supply of food in Hong Kong in general. Furthermore, results from the routine food surveillance programme and additional baseline studies conducted by the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene indicate that the levels of metallic contamination in food available in the local market can generally comply with the proposed MLs," the spokesman said.

The Amendment Regulation will be tabled before the Legislative Council on June 13, 2018, for negative vetting.