

Government has zero tolerance policy towards dangerous drugs

The Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau (SB) reminds members of the public that cannabidiol (CBD) products may contain a dangerous drug, i.e. tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), an addictive compound in cannabis. Law enforcement agencies will take resolute action to tackle any product containing THC.

In recent years, the number of reported cannabis abusers has increased, and the situation of young people abusing cannabis is particularly worrying. A large number of CBD products claiming to be THC-free have appeared in the market lately, causing public concern on whether these products may contain prohibited ingredients.

According to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, Chapter 134 of the Laws of Hong Kong, cannabis and its compound THC, regardless of their concentration, are dangerous drugs and must not be illegally imported or sold in the market.

The Chairman of the Action Committee Against Narcotics, Dr Donald Li, welcomed the enforcement action taken by the Government to protect public health. He said, "With more CBD products available in the market, members of the public are increasingly concerned about these products, including whether they contain the dangerous drug THC. I fully support law enforcement agencies to take action against illegal products, thus actively responding to public concern."

Dr Li said, "THC is the main psychoactive substance in cannabis. Cannabis and THC are obviously harmful to the body, and can cause serious damage to health, including addiction, hallucinations, IQ loss, impairment, depression, decreased concentration, sensory distortions, heart attacks and strokes for young cannabis users."

The Commissioner for Narcotics, Ms Ivy Law, said, "According to the drug conventions of the United Nations, cannabis and THC are dangerous drugs under strict control. Hong Kong has a zero tolerance policy towards dangerous drugs, and will not tolerate drug-related activities. Law enforcement agencies will continue to take enforcement action to combat illegal products. The Government will also continue to provide public education through various channels to help members of the public, especially young people, to correctly understand that cannabis is a drug."

According to prevailing research in various places, CBD is not psychoactive, and it has not been controlled as a dangerous drug internationally and in Hong Kong. However, since CBD is generally extracted from cannabis, CBD products may contain THC. Importers and traders are responsible for ensuring that the products they supply do not contain THC or other dangerous drugs. Members of the public are advised to seek information

from shops or sellers about the ingredients of CBD products before buying them. If in doubt, they should refrain from buying or using the products concerned.

Trafficking in dangerous drugs is punishable by a fine of up to \$5 million and imprisonment for life. Illegal possession or consumption of dangerous drugs is punishable by a fine of up to \$1 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Earlier this year, the ND of the SB and the Department of Health jointly issued an information note on CBD products to provide relevant information to importers, traders and members of the public. The information note is available at: www.nd.gov.hk/pdf/CBD_Information_Note_English.pdf.