

Government's response to media enquiries on To Kwa Wan Station of Shatin to Central Link works project

In response to media enquiries on To Kwa Wan Station of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) works project, a government spokesman yesterday (August 9) responded as follows:

The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) was entrusted by the Government for the design, construction and commissioning of the SCL project. As To Kwa Wan Station of the SCL works project is on government land, it is exempted from the Buildings Ordinance (BO). However, according to the Entrustment Agreement signed between the MTRCL and the Government, the MTRCL must assure that the quality of works is up to the standards required, including adopting the standards stated in the BO.

The SCL To Kwa Wan Station is located underneath Ma Tau Wai Road. The works commenced in 2012 and the main station structure was substantially completed in December 2016. For safety and to ensure that the construction meets the design and statutory requirements, before the commencement of the works, the contractor will conduct surveys on the buildings in the vicinity of the site to record their condition and install monitoring points in the vicinity of some buildings, facilities and works sites to monitor the impact of the excavation works on the surrounding buildings and facilities.

The Highways Department (HyD) will monitor the works in accordance with the three triggering levels system (i.e. alert, alarm and action) which was submitted by the MTRCL before the commencement of the works and subsequently examined. During the construction, the contractor will periodically read the data at each monitoring point in order to monitor the movement of the monitoring points. The MTRCL will compile the relevant data and report the monitoring results to the HyD on a regular basis. According to the record, the settlement of some monitoring points exceeded the alarm level during the construction. After the monitoring data exceeds the alarm level, the contractor needs to submit detailed action plan to the MTRCL and relevant departments for review, such as the addition of recharge wells, the provision of temporary support at the station site, the survey of the existing condition of the building by professional engineers, enhancing monitoring of settlement or tilting conditions and conducting building assessments, to ensure the safety of the public and buildings. If monitoring data reaches or exceeds the action level, the HyD will request the MTRCL to take appropriate remedial measures.

Some members of the Kowloon City District Council Working Group on the SCL raised their concerns in the meeting held in June 2016 and July 2017 regarding the vibration caused by the tunnel excavation. In this connection, the MTRCL and the HyD replied to the Working Group on the SCL that the monitoring data recorded had been at normal levels since the commencement of

the tunnel excavation in April 2015 from the To Kwa Wan Station. As more time is needed to check the records, supplementary response will be given after obtaining the relevant information.

At present, the construction of the station structure is nearing completion and the settlement of the building has been stabilised.

On the other hand, the Buildings Department (BD) will, in response to reports concerning the safety of private buildings affected by the excavation works, deploy staff to inspect the buildings in question and make referral to the HyD and the MTRCL for follow-up in parallel. The BD will, according to the structural safety condition of the buildings, take appropriate follow-up action on building safety issues in accordance with the BO.

In response to media reports yesterday about the settlement of 23 adjacent buildings due to the MTRCL's excavation works for the platform of To Kwa Wan Station in 2016, BD officers were deployed to inspect the 23 buildings concerned yesterday. No obvious structural safety problem was found.

Excessive preservative found in dried apricot and preserved leaf mustard samples and in breach of food labelling regulation

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (August 9) that a loose-pack dried apricot sample and a prepackaged preserved leaf mustard sample were found to contain a preservative, sulphur dioxide, at levels exceeding the legal limits, and the preservative was not declared on the food label of the prepackaged preserved leaf mustard sample. The CFS is following up on the cases.

Details of the product of preserved leaf mustard are as follows:

Product name: Chinese Sauerkraut
Hong Kong distributor: Not available in English
Net weight: 225 grams per box
Best-before date: September 27, 2018

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned dried apricot and preserved leaf mustard samples from two supermarkets located respectively in Tai Po and Sha Tin for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the dried apricot sample contained sulphur dioxide at a

level of 2 700 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 2 000 ppm, whereas the preserved leaf mustard sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 240 ppm, exceeding the legal limit of 100 ppm, and the preservative was not declared on the food label," the spokesman said.

The CFS has informed the vendors concerned of the irregularities and the vendors have stopped selling and removed from shelves the affected batches of the products according to the CFS' instructions. The CFS is also tracing the source and distribution of the affected products. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and meat products. This preservative is of low toxicity. As it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. Occasional consumption of the abovementioned dried apricot with sulphur dioxide is unlikely to pose any adverse health effect to consumers. However, long term consumption may affect the digestive system. Based on the level of sulphur dioxide detected in the unsatisfactory sample of preserved leaf mustard, adverse health effects will not be caused under usual consumption. However, for individuals who are allergic to this preservative, there may be symptoms of shortness of breath, headache and nausea. The public are advised to seek medical treatment if they feel unwell after taking the food.

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 the food ingredients of all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should be listed out on the list of ingredients (including additives). Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon convictions. Members of the public should buy food from reliable suppliers, and maintain a balanced diet so as to avoid excessive intake of certain chemicals as a result of frequent consumption of a small range of food items.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incidents and take appropriate actions. Investigation is ongoing.

Excessive cadmium found in white rice sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (August 9) announced that a sample of prepackaged white rice imported from Japan was detected with cadmium, a metallic contaminant, exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the case.

Details of the product are as follows:

Product name: Not available in English
Place of origin: Japan
Importer: Itochu Logistics (HK) Limited
Net weight: 2 kilograms
Production date: July 12, 2018

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample at import level for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The result showed that the sample contained cadmium at a level of 0.16 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 0.1ppm. The CFS has informed the importer concerned of the irregularity. The product concerned has not entered the market," a CFS spokesman said.

"Based on the level of cadmium detected in the sample, adverse health effects will not be caused under usual consumption," the spokesman said.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination above the legal limits is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incident, continue to follow up and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

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