

CFS announces food safety report for May

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 29) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 13 700 food samples tested were satisfactory except for seven samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 1 800 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, some 4 000 samples were taken for chemical tests and the remaining 7 900 (including about 7 500 taken from food imported from Japan) were collected to test radiation levels.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygienic indicators, while the chemical tests included pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others.

The samples comprised about 3 600 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; 800 samples of meat and poultry and their products; 1 700 samples of aquatic and related products; 1 200 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; 900 samples of cereals, grains and their products; and 5 500 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The seven unsatisfactory samples comprised three vegetable and fruit samples detected with pesticide residues exceeding the legal limits; two fresh beef samples found to contain a preservative, sulphur dioxide; a popsicle sample detected with coliform bacteria exceeding the legal limit; and a sample of rice with barbecued pork and duck found to contain Salmonella.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples, including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

Since the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) came into effect on August 1, 2014, as of May 31 this year, the CFS has taken over 144 500 food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose before harvesting. The maximum residue limits (MRLs) of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum

concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The spokesman also reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

[Appointments to Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis](#)

The Government announced today (June 29) the appointments to the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis for a term of three years from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2021.

Co-chaired by the Director of Health and the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority, the Steering Committee has been set up to formulate strategies to effectively prevent and control viral hepatitis. Appointed by the Secretary for Food and Health, membership comprises representatives of academia and experts of different medical specialties, the Food and Health Bureau, the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said that viral hepatitis carries a huge disease burden in terms of morbidity and mortality both locally and worldwide.

"In order to step up our efforts with a view to eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat in Hong Kong, a comprehensive strategy covering both prevention and treatment of viral hepatitis would be instrumental," Professor Chan said.

"With the valuable advice from members who are renowned experts and academics specialising in viral hepatitis, the Steering Committee will spearhead the effort in devising and following through with an action plan for the territory," she added.

Hong Kong has implemented universal hepatitis B testing of pregnant mothers and hepatitis B vaccination of all newborns for 30 years. Together with various infection control measures, these strategies have successfully lowered the prevalence of hepatitis B in many groups of the

population. However, viral hepatitis continues to present major health concern, as chronic infection may give rise to liver-related complications, including liver cancer, one of the most common cancers in Hong Kong.

The terms of reference of the Steering Committee are:

- (1) to keep in view local and international developments in the prevention and control of viral hepatitis;
- (2) to advise the Government on overall policy, targeted strategies and effective resource allocation related to the prevention and control of viral hepatitis with a view to formulating an Action Plan; and
- (3) to conduct and co-ordinate monitoring and evaluation of viral hepatitis control as set out in the Action Plan, and recommend appropriate response.

Membership of the Steering Committee is as follows:

Co-chairpersons

Director of Health
Chief Executive, Hospital Authority

Ex-officio members

Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Health) 1
Controller, Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health
Director (Quality and Safety), Hospital Authority

Members

Professor Henry Chan Lik-yuen
Dr Angus Chan Ming-wai
Dr Rita Ho Ka-wai
Dr Thomas Lai Sik-to
Dr Lao Wai-cheung
Professor Lau Yu-lung
Professor Lee Shui-shan
Dr Nancy Leung Wai-yee
Dr Leung Wing-cheong
Dr Janice Lo Yee-chi
Dr Owen Tsang Tak-yin
Professor Richard Yuen Man-fung

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (June 29) released the latest grading of water quality for 37 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Nineteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 15 as Fair (Grade 2) and four as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Pui O Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	South Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Trio Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach
Lower Cheung Sha Beach	

Grade 2 beaches are:

Approach Beach	Golden Beach
Butterfly Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Shek O Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Ting Kau Beach
Discovery Bay	

Grade 3 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Casam Beach	Lido Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach has

been upgraded from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Cafeteria New Beach, Golden Beach and Middle Bay Beach have been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2, and Casam Beach, Hoi Mei Wan Beach and Lido Beach from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.beachwq.gov.hk and www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Two illegal workers jailed

Two illegal workers comprising a Vietnamese and an Indonesian were jailed at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (June 28).

During an anti-illegal worker operation mounted on June 7, the Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a residential building in Jordan. A female Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 49, was arrested. When intercepted she was collecting garbage. Upon identity checking, she was found to be an illegal immigrant. In addition, she was also suspected of using and being in possession of a forged identity card. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

Furthermore, during a joint operation conducted by the ImmD and the Labour Department codenamed "Rainbow" on June 25, ImmD investigators raided a restaurant in Kowloon City. A female Indonesian illegal worker, aged 34, was arrested. When intercepted she was washing dishes. Upon identity checking, she produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The two illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts

yesterday with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. After trial, they were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, one of them was also charged with using a forged Hong Kong identity card and was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. All sentences are to run concurrently, making a total of 18 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman also warned that it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or an identity card relating to other person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

Postal services to Sri Lanka return to normal

Hongkong Post announced today (June 29) that, as advised by the postal administration of Sri Lanka, postal services to Sri Lanka have returned to normal.