

[Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 19) closely monitoring 75 additional cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), including 23 deaths, reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) between January 12 and May 31, 2018, and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, among the 59 male and 16 female patients aged 15 to 93, 57 of them had underlying illnesses, 24 had exposure to camels, and three were health care workers. Among these 75 cases, 21 cases were in two hospital clusters and two household clusters.

According to the latest information, 2 220 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 790 deaths), including 2 003 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 1 844 in the KSA, 87 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 19 in Qatar, 11 in Oman, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus," the spokesman said.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

[Effective Exchange Rate Index](#)

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday,

June 19, 2018 is 100.7 (up 0.4 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, June 16, 2018 was 100.3 (up 0.1 against last Friday's index).

Update on cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases in Tuen Mun Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) carriers in a female orthopaedic and traumatology ward, the spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital made the following update today (June 19):

In accordance with the prevailing infection control guidelines, the hospital has performed contact tracing and four more patients (aged 80 to 99) were confirmed as VRE carrier without clinical symptoms. They are hospitalised and are in a stable condition.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Three illegal workers jailed

Three Pakistani illegal workers holding recognisance forms were jailed at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on June 15.

During operation "Twilight" held on May 7, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators conducted a raid in Tai Wai. A male Pakistani illegal worker, aged 29, was arrested. When intercepted he was conveying vegetables. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

In addition, ImmD investigators received referrals from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate two illegal employment cases in February

and June. Enforcement officers arrested two male Pakistani workers, aged 31 and 32, selling wallets in Central and conveying goods in Shatin respectively. Upon identity checking, they produced for inspection recognisance forms issued by the ImmD, which prohibit them from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that they were non-refoulement claimants.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts 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. They were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment to 22 months and 2 weeks' 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 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 of 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.

[Two renovation contractors of Sam Shing Commercial Centre in Tuen Mun convicted for illegally carrying out renovation works on holidays](#)

Renovation contractors of Sam Shing Commercial Centre in Tuen Mun were found carrying out works illegally on public holidays at the shopping centre. The two contractors concerned, Sunlight Electric Limited and Arco Decoration Limited, were fined a total of \$20,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts on June 12 and today (June 19) respectively for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO).

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) received a public complaint in November last year about the noise nuisance generated by renovation works at Sam Shing Commercial Centre. During blitz inspections conducted by EPD officers, it was found that the two contractors concerned did not possess a construction noise permit (CNP) issued by the EPD and they carried out works on holidays illegally. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the contractors concerned in accordance with the NCO.

The NCO aims to protect the public from disturbance of rest and to minimise noise nuisance. An EPD spokesman stressed that construction and renovation contractors should schedule works for the daytime of non-general holidays as far as possible to minimise disturbance to nearby residents. If the construction work has to be conducted during the restricted hours (between 7pm and 7am on the following day, or at any time on a general holiday), the contractor has to obtain prior approval from the EPD. Contractors must also implement noise mitigation measures to minimise noise nuisance as per the requirement of the CNP. Otherwise, it constitutes an offence. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$200,000 may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.