

Inter-departmental drill on emergency response to flooding held in Tai O (with photos)

The Islands District Office (IDO), in collaboration with relevant government departments and local organisations, conducted a rescue and evacuation drill today (June 15) to enhance preparedness in the event of serious flooding in Tai O and to promote residents' understanding of the emergency response arrangements.

The Fire Services Department (FSD), the Police, the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), the Drainage Services Department (DSD), the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Housing Department, the Civil Aid Service (CAS), the Tai O Rural Committee, the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council and the Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association Tai O Community Work Office participated in the drill.

According to the emergency response plan, when the HKO forecasts that the sea level at Tai O would rise to 3.3 metres above Chart Datum (mCD) or more in the coming few hours during a tropical cyclone, the HKO will issue an early alert to relevant government departments/organisations and resident representatives/fishermen representatives by SMS. Upon receipt of the early alert, the IDO will activate an emergency co-ordination centre at the Tai O Rural Committee Office, jointly set up by the IDO, the FSD, the Police, the SWD, other government departments concerned and relevant non-governmental organisations. The emergency co-ordination centre will co-ordinate any necessary evacuation, rescue and emergency relief efforts for Tai O.

Meanwhile, upon receipt of the early alert from the HKO, the resident representatives/fishermen representatives will help to disseminate the information to residents so that the residents can stay vigilant on flooding and take refuge in safe locations if needed. Temporary shelters at the Tai O Rural Committee Office, the Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association Tai O Community Work Office on the ground floor of Lung Tin Shopping Centre and the Lung Tin Transit Centre will be opened for residents in need.



Twenty immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including operations codenamed "Twilight" and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion", from June 11 to 14. A total of 14 illegal workers and six suspected employers were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 32 target locations including restaurants, retail shops, warehouses, a market, a sports ground, industrial buildings, commercial buildings and residential buildings. A total of 11 illegal workers and four employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised five men and six women, aged 24 to 54. Among them, three men and two women were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Another woman was suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. Meanwhile, four men, aged 21 to 45, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

Furthermore, during operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided 20 target locations in Kowloon East districts, Tsing Yi and Kwai Chung including restaurants, food stalls, retail shops, industrial buildings and residential buildings. Three illegal workers and two employers were arrested. The three male illegal workers, aged 40 to 45, were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. Meanwhile, two men, aged 39 and 51, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The 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. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another 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 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.

Lido Beach and Casam Beach temporarily closed

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (June 15) that Lido Beach and Casam Beach in Tsuen Wan District are temporarily closed until further notice for maintenance of shark prevention nets. Red flags have been hoisted at the beaches. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beaches.

June 2018 issue of "Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics" now available

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) published today (June 15) the June 2018 issue of the "Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics" (HKMDS).

Apart from providing up-to-date statistics, this issue also contains two feature articles entitled "The Cultural and Creative Industries in Hong Kong" and "Trade between Hong Kong and the Mainland of China".

"The Cultural and Creative Industries in Hong Kong"

The cultural and creative industries are among the most dynamic economic sectors in Hong Kong, contributing to both economic growth and job creation. They comprise a set of knowledge-based activities that deploy creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs and deliver goods and services with cultural, artistic and creative contents. This feature article provides the

latest statistics of the cultural and creative industries in Hong Kong in 2016.

For enquiries about this feature article, please contact the Construction and Miscellaneous Services Statistics Section, C&SD (Tel: 3903 6962; email: asps@censtatd.gov.hk).

"Trade between Hong Kong and the Mainland of China"

Hong Kong has maintained a close trading relationship with the mainland of China (the Mainland) for many years. In the past decade, the Mainland was Hong Kong's largest destination of total exports and supplier of imports, on average accounting for 53.2% and 47.0% of Hong Kong's total exports and imports respectively.

This feature article analyses the performance and highlights the salient features of trade between Hong Kong and the Mainland during the period from 2008 to 2017.

For enquiries about this feature article, please contact the Trade Analysis Section, C&SD (Tel: 2582 5026; email: trade@censtatd.gov.hk).

Published in bilingual form, the HKMDS is a compact volume of official statistics containing about 140 tables. It collects up-to-date statistical series on various aspects of the social and economic situation of Hong Kong. Topics include population; labour; external trade; National Income and Balance of Payments; prices; business performance; energy; housing and property; government accounts, finance and insurance; and transport, communications and tourism. For selected key statistical items, over 20 charts depicting the annual trend in the past decade and quarterly or monthly trend in the recent two years are also available. Users can download the Digest free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp460.jsp?productCode=B1010002).

Enquiries about the contents of the Digest can be directed to the Statistical Information Services Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4738; email: gen-enquiry@censtatd.gov.hk).

SFH speaks on e-cigarettes

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a public event today (June 15):

Reporter: Why not a complete ban if it is so risky to health?

Secretary for Food and Health: We are very concerned about e-cigarettes and

also the heat-not-burn cigarettes because their components are actually harmful to health. Therefore, the Government has decided to strengthen its regulation. On deciding the direction of regulation or how to strengthen the regulation, first of all, we look into international evidence and local evidence. Secondly, we also revisit how the other countries are doing and what is the recommendation of the World Health Organization and other organisations' recommendations. Thirdly, we also need to look at the local situation to devise a regulation mechanism. Although we understand that there are different opinions about our proposed regulation direction, we continue to receive comments and review the international evidence. We do not preclude if there are any issues or problems with the existing proposed regulation framework. We will further strengthen our regulation.

Reporter: Is it because of the pressure from the tobacco manufacturers that the Government is not considering a complete ban?

Secretary for Food and Health: As a regulatory authority and also the Food and Health Bureau, we stand up to any pressure. The most important thing is public health. To protect public health is our first and foremost responsibility, so we can stand up to any pressure.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)