

Link Properties Limited fined as ventilation system of Maritime Market in Tsing Yi caused noise nuisance to residents

The ventilation and refrigeration system of the fresh market Maritime Market at Cheung Fat Plaza in Tsing Yi generated excessive noise at night which affected nearby residents. The property owner, Link Properties Limited, failed to implement noise abatement measures in accordance with the noise abatement notice (NAN) and was fined \$30,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 5) for contravening the Noise Control Ordinance (NCO).

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that the department received five complaints in January and February last year about the noise nuisance generated from Maritime Market. The investigation conducted by the EPD enforcement officers confirmed that the noise generated by the market's ventilation and refrigeration system at night exceeded the statutory limit and an NAN was issued to the owner, Link Properties Limited, requesting improvement. EPD staff made a follow-up noise assessment in October last year and found that the noise generated from its system at night still exceeded the statutory limit, which violated the requirements of the NAN. The department then initiated prosecution under the NCO. Link Properties Limited later installed noise abatement equipment for the ventilation and refrigeration system of Maritime Market and the noise problem has been rectified.

The spokesman reminded all property owners to install noise abatement equipment for the ventilation and refrigeration system at their premises and ensure its normal operation. A property owner who receives an NAN issued by the EPD has to implement noise abatement measures before the deadline. Otherwise, it will constitute an offence.

According to the NCO, anyone failing to comply with any requirement of an NAN commits 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 conviction.

CHP investigates two suspected food

poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 5) investigating two suspected food poisoning clusters affecting five persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved three women, aged 26 to 29, who developed fever, abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting about five to 12 hours after having a meal at a food premises in Kwun Tong on June 2.

The second cluster involved two women, aged 40 and 41, who developed similar symptoms about four to six hours after having lunch at the same food premises on June 4.

All affected persons have sought medical advice and two patients from the first cluster required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition.

"We have alerted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to the incident and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
 - Avoid eating raw seafood;
 - Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
 - Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
 - Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
 - Use two sets of chopsticks and eating utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
 - Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
 - Drink boiled water;
 - Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
 - Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.
-

Grant approved for flood victims in Kenya

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has accepted the advice of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee and approved from the Disaster Relief Fund a grant of \$6.217 million to World Vision Hong Kong for providing relief to flood victims in Kenya.

Announcing the grant today (June 5), a spokesman for the Government said that the grant will be used to provide water filters, household and hygiene items and mobile toilets to the victims. The Committee hoped the grant would facilitate the provision of timely relief to the victims and help them restore their normal living.

"To ensure that the money is used for the designated purposes, World Vision Hong Kong will be asked to submit an evaluation report and an audited account on the use of the grant after the relief project has been completed," the spokesman said.

Pesticide residue exceeds legal limit in tomato sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 5) announced that a tomato sample was found to have pesticide residue at a level exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the case.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the tomato sample at import level for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained acetamiprid at a level of 0.39 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the maximum residue limit (MRL) of 0.2 ppm.

"Based on the level of pesticide residue detected in the sample, adverse health effects would not be caused under usual consumption."

Generally speaking, to reduce pesticide residues in vegetables, members of the public can rinse vegetables thoroughly under clean running water, and scrub produce with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances including pesticides and contaminants from the surface and the crevices, when appropriate.

Any person who imports, manufactures or sells any food not in compliance with the requirements of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap

132CM) concerning pesticide residues commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Since the regulation came into effect on August 1, 2014, the CFS has taken over 144 900 samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. Together with the unsatisfactory sample announced today, a total of 219 food samples (including 211 vegetable and fruit samples) have been detected as having excessive 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 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 CFS will follow up on the unsatisfactory result, including tracing the source of the food in question and taking samples for testing. Investigation is ongoing.

Offers of 2018-19 civil service pay adjustment

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) made the following pay offers, effective retrospectively from April 1, 2018, to the staff side of the four civil service central consultative councils today (June 5):

(a) a pay increase of 4.06 per cent for civil servants in the upper salary band and the directorate (equals to the net pay trend indicator (PTI) for the upper salary band), subject to the pay points referred to in (i) and (ii) below the dollar values of which should be as specified:

(i) Master Pay Scale 34 at \$70,590; and

(ii) General Disciplined Services (Officer) Pay Scale (GDS(0)) 20 and Police Pay Scale (PPS) 36 at \$70,470, and GDS(0) 21 and PPS 37 at \$70,970;

(b) a pay increase of 4.51 per cent for civil servants in the lower and middle salary bands (equals to the net PTI for the middle salary band).

The above decision was made by the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) after considering all relevant factors under the established annual

civil service pay adjustment mechanism, including:

- * the net PTIs
- * the state of Hong Kong's economy
- * changes in the cost of living
- * the Government's fiscal position
- * the pay claims of the staff side
- * civil service morale

"The CE-in-Council made the decision in accordance with the established mechanism. The pay offers for civil servants in the upper and middle salary bands are the same as their respective net PTIs (i.e. 4.06 per cent and 4.51 per cent respectively). The pay offer for civil servants in the lower salary band follows the net PTI for the middle salary band due to the 'bring-up' arrangement," a spokesman for the CSB said.

"Under the 'bring-up' arrangement, if the net PTI for the lower salary band is lower than that for the middle salary band, its pay adjustment will be brought up to the same level of the net PTI for the middle salary band, subject to the decision of the CE-in-Council," the spokesman said.

"In accordance with past practice, the pay offer for directorate civil servants follows the arrangement for civil servants in the upper salary band," the spokesman added.

The Government will submit the pay adjustment proposal to the Legislative Council Finance Committee for consideration as soon as possible after the CE-in-Council considers the response from the staff side to the pay offers and makes a decision on the 2018-19 civil service pay adjustment.