

Company director sentenced to 240 hours' community service order for contravening Employment Ordinance

A director of CIL Holdings Limited was prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for violation of the Employment Ordinance (EO). The director pleaded guilty earlier and was sentenced at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (December 18) to a community service order of 240 hours.

The company failed to pay an employee, in accordance with the requirement of the EO, wages totalling about \$1.05 million within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods and termination of employment contract. The company also failed to pay another employee the awarded sum of about \$750,000 within 14 days after the date set by the Labour Tribunal (LT). The director concerned was prosecuted and convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences committed by the company.

"The judgment will disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within a statutory time limit stipulated in the EO, as well as the sums awarded by the LT or the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

SDEV to lead delegation to visit Shanghai

The Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, will lead a delegation of the Development Bureau (DEVB) tomorrow (December 19) to visit Shanghai with a delegation of the Legislative Council Panel on Development.

Ms Linn will visit the Shanghai Municipal People's Government and relevant departments with policy areas related to the DEVB, namely the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Housing, Urban-Rural Development and Management, the Shanghai Water Authority and the Lingang Special Area Administration. Ms Linn will also visit development projects at Xuhui West Bund and Zhangyuan.

Ms Linn will return to Hong Kong on December 21 evening. During her absence, the Under Secretary for Development, Mr David Lam, will be the Acting Secretary for Development.

Sha Tau Kok Post Office to open for business on January 1, 2024, to tie in with Second Phase Opening-up of Sha Tau Kok

Hongkong Post announced today (December 18) that to tie in with the Second Phase Opening-up of Sha Tau Kok from January 1, 2024, Sha Tau Kok Post Office will open for business on that day from 9am to 4pm.

Six postcards featuring the winning entries of the Sha Tau Kok Photo and Video Competition will be available for sale at Sha Tau Kok Post Office from January 1, 2024. In addition, two new cachets designed by the Security Bureau will also be put into use. The above-mentioned postcards and cachets will only be provided at Sha Tau Kok Post Office. General postal services will also be provided at Sha Tau Kok Post Office on that day.

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Canada and US suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 18) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in areas in Canada and the United States (US), the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the relevant areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

The relevant areas are as follows:

Canada
Province of Manitoba
(1) Municipality of Rhineland

Province of Alberta
(2) Lac Ste. Anne County

US
State of New York
(3) Dutchess County

State of California
(4) San Joaquin County

State of Minnesota
(5) Olmsted County
(6) Todd County

State of Michigan
(7) Montmorency County

State of South Dakota
(8) Bon Homme County
(9) Hamlin County

State of Ohio
(10) Hardin County

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 20 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Canada, and about 21 470 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 57.11 million poultry eggs from the US in the first nine months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the Canadian and American authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the WOH and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

DH reminds public of deregistration of pharmaceutical products containing pholcodine with effect from January 1, 2024

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 18) reminded the public that pharmaceutical products containing pholcodine will be deregistered and cannot be sold on the market with effect from January 1, 2024.

Pholcodine is a centrally acting cough suppressant, which is used in adults and children to treat a non-productive cough. After taking into consideration various factors including the latest recommendations on pholcodine by overseas regulatory authorities, and advice given by local experts that the use of pholcodine in the 12 months before general anaesthesia with neuromuscular blocking agents (NMBAs) is a risk for developing NMBA anaphylaxis, the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong decided to deregister pharmaceutical products containing pholcodine with effect from January 1, 2024. A [press release](#) together with a list of 27 affected products (these products are listed in the Attachment) was issued on July 7 this year to announce the decision. The DH had also issued letters to healthcare professionals and pharmaceutical traders to inform them of the decision and requested the drug manufacturers and wholesale dealers concerned to recall their pharmaceutical products from the market.

"The DH has issued reminder letters to healthcare professionals and the certificate holders concerned again regarding the commencement date of deregistration of the products. Patients who are still using the pharmaceutical products concerned should contact healthcare professionals immediately for switching to suitable alternative treatments," a spokesman for the DH said.

"With effect from January 1, 2024, all drug manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and healthcare professionals must stop selling or supplying pharmaceutical products containing pholcodine. Drug manufacturers and wholesalers must recall all products concerned from the market by December 31 this year. The DH will take enforcement action against any illegal possession or sale of pharmaceutical products containing pholcodine from January 1 next year," the spokesman added.

Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138), illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products and Part 1 poisons is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty for each offence upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.