

# Hong Kong Customs conducts enforcement action against trader suspected of supplying fish oil soft gel capsules with false trade descriptions (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (October 18) arrested a male sales manager of a wholesaler suspected of supplying fish oil soft gel capsules with false trade descriptions, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Acting on information provided by a relevant organisation, Customs earlier test-purchased at a retailer two models of fish oil soft gel capsules which were suspected of carrying false trade descriptions. Customs officers later sent samples to the Government Laboratory for examination. The analysis results showed that the DHA and EPA contents of the two products were 30 per cent to 86 per cent less than the claimed value.

Customs officers then mounted an enforcement operation yesterday and arrested a 36-year-old male sales manager of the wholesaler involved in the case.

An investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation. The likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure products at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any person who applies a false trade description to goods or supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).



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## [Hong Kong Customs in joint operations with FEHD seizes 826 suspected smuggled hairy crabs \(with photo\)](#)

The Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) mounted joint operations at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point yesterday (October 18) and seized a total of 826 suspected smuggled hairy crabs with a total estimated market value of about \$49,000.

Based on risk assessment, Customs officers yesterday intercepted an incoming goods vehicle declared as carrying a batch of cross-boundary merchandise including food items at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point. Upon inspection, the batch of suspected smuggled hairy crabs was found concealed inside the cargo compartment of the vehicle. The seized hairy crabs did not come with health certificates issued by the relevant authorities of the exporting economies, and failed to comply with the requirements of the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit. A male driver suspected to be connected with the case and the seized hairy crabs were handed over to the FEHD for follow-up investigation.

To combat illegal importing of hairy crabs at sea, land and air control points, the C&ED and the CFS have commenced a three-month joint operation this September 1. As of yesterday, the C&ED has referred 35 cases to the CFS for follow-up action. Among which, 17 cases, involving about 7 800 hairy crabs with a total weight of about 1 400 kilograms, were not covered by any health certificates.

Customs reminds members of the public that smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2

million and imprisonment for seven years.

Customs also reminds the trade not to import or put on sale hairy crabs with an unknown origin, and consumers should make purchases at reputable shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD.

According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations, any person who imports game, meat, poultry or eggs should produce a health certificate issued by an issuing entity from the place of origin or obtain prior permission in writing from the FEHD. Offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

According to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction. Moreover, under the Food Safety Ordinance, any person who, without reasonable excuse, does not register but carries on a food importation or distribution business commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Customs and the CFS will keep up close co-operation and intelligence exchanges, while joint operations will be conducted to combat illegal food import activities.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).



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## [Case of invasive Haemophilus](#)

# influenzae type b infection under CHP investigation

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 19) investigating a case of invasive Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) infection, and hence urged the public to maintain good personal hygiene, especially hand hygiene.

The case involves a 4-year-old girl with good past health. She presented with fever, vomiting and a decreased oral intake since October 11 and also developed neck stiffness later. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital on October 13 and was admitted for treatment on the same day. The patient is now in stable condition.

Her blood sample tested positive for Hib upon laboratory testing. Her clinical diagnoses were meningitis and septicaemia.

The patient had no recent travel history and her home contacts remain asymptomatic. Investigations are ongoing.

Invasive Hib infection has been a statutorily notifiable infectious disease since July 2008. Invasive Hib infection commonly presents clinically as an infection of membranes covering the brain (meningitis), often accompanied by bacteria entering the bloodstream. It may also affect other parts of the body such as the lungs, the upper part of the throat (epiglottis), joints and bones. Prompt antibiotic treatment is necessary.

"Hib infection can be spread by contact with the nose or throat secretions of a patient. If a persistent fever, unusual changes in behaviour or other deteriorating conditions develop, or if in doubt, seek medical attention immediately," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Members of the public are advised to observe personal hygiene and take heed of the preventive measures below:

- Maintain hand hygiene and clean hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are soiled with respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing or coughing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal discharge and sputum properly;
- Do not share eating and drinking utensils, and wash them thoroughly after use;
- Avoid going to crowded places if not feeling well; and
- An effective vaccine against Hib is available. For personal protection, seek advice from a healthcare professional.

â€‹The public may visit the CHP's invasive Hib [page](#) for more information.

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## CSSA caseload for September 2023

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in September showed a drop of 1 283 cases, representing a decrease of 0.6 per cent compared with that of August, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (October 19).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of September stood at 201 977 (see attached table), with a total of 276 591 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 2.2 per cent to 1 658 cases. Single parent cases decreased by 1.5 per cent to 21 126 cases. Unemployment cases decreased by 0.9 per cent to 17 473 cases. Old age cases declined by 0.5 per cent to 112 996 cases. Permanent disability cases dropped by 0.3 per cent to 17 204 cases. Ill-health cases slightly decreased by 0.2 per cent to 27 583 cases.

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## Composite Interest Rate: End of September 2023

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (October 19) the composite interest rate at the end of September 2023 (Note 1).

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, increased by 13 basis points to 2.68 per cent at the end of September 2023, from 2.55 per cent at the end of August 2023 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The increase in composite interest rate reflected increases in the weighted funding cost for deposits and interbank funds during the month (see Chart 2 in the Annex) (Note 2).

The historical data of the composite interest rate from the end of the fourth quarter of 2003 to the end of September 2023 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website ([www.hkma.gov.hk](http://www.hkma.gov.hk)).

Note 1: The composite interest rate is a weighted average interest rate of all Hong Kong dollar interest-rate-sensitive liabilities, which include deposits from customers, amounts due to banks, negotiable certificates of deposit and other debt instruments, and all other liabilities that do not involve any formal payment of interest but the values of which are sensitive

to interest rate movements (such as Hong Kong dollar non-interest bearing demand deposits) on the books of banks. Data from retail banks, which account for about 90 per cent of the total customers' deposits in the banking sector, are used in the calculation. It should be noted that the composite interest rate represents only average interest expenses. There are various other costs involved in the making of a loan, such as operating costs (e.g. staff and rental expenses), credit cost and hedging cost, which are not covered by the composite interest rate.

Note 2: Since June 2019, the composite interest rate and weighted deposit rate have been calculated based on the new local "Interest rate risk in the banking book" (IRRBB) framework. As such, these figures are not strictly comparable with those of previous months.