

Hong Kong Customs alerts public on two unsafe soother holders (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (April 9) reminded members of the public to stay alert to two models of unsafe soother holders. Test results indicated that the fasteners and straps of the two models posed suffocation and strangulation risks. To avoid an accident, parents should immediately stop the use of those two soother holders by their young children. Traders should also remove the soother holders concerned from their shelves.

Customs earlier received a referral from a related organisation that suspected unsafe soother holders were being supplied on the market. Customs officers immediately test-purchased two models of soother holders from two related retailers respectively for safety testing. Test results revealed that the fasteners of the two models protruded past the base of two test guides simulating the oral cavity of young children but no ventilation hole was provided. The detachable soother fastener of one model also passed completely another test guide simulating the mouth size of infants, posing a danger of suffocation if accidentally swallowed. Another model had a maximum length exceeding the limit of safety standard's requirement under tensile test, posing a danger of strangulation. Also, such a model failed to bear the identification markings and bilingual warnings or cautions prescribed in the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance (TCPSO). In addition, the two models failed to provide safety labelling prescribed in the safety standard such as warnings and instructions for use.

Customs later conducted operations and searched the premises of retailers and wholesalers in connection with the case. No suspected unsafe soother holders of the same models were found. The prohibition notices were served to prohibit the continued sale of the two models by the two retailers and related wholesalers.

Investigations are ongoing.

Customs reminds members of the public to observe the following safety tips when purchasing and using soother holders:

- Pay attention to and follow the instructions associated with the soother holders;
- Check carefully before each use. Throw away at the first sign of damage or weakness;
- Never lengthen the straps of the soother holders;
- Never attach them to cords, ribbons, laces or loose parts of clothing to prevent young children from being at risk of strangulation; and
- Stay constantly vigilant on the use of such products by young children to ensure their safety.

Customs is committed to the protection of consumer safety and regularly conducts spot checks and safety tests on toys and children's products to ensure that they are reasonably safe for use by consumers.

Under the TCPSO, it is an offence to import, manufacture or supply unsafe toys or children's products. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on a subsequent conviction.

Members of the public may report information relating to suspected unsafe toys or children's products via Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



[Appointment of Chief Executive Officer to Accounting and Financial Reporting Council](#)

The Chief Executive, pursuant to the Accounting and Financial Reporting Council Ordinance (Cap. 588), has appointed Ms Janey Lai Chui-pik as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Accounting and Financial Reporting Council (AFRC) for a term of three years from April 9, 2024, to April 8, 2027.

Announcing the appointment today (April 9), a spokesman for the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau said, "Ms Lai is a veteran

accountant with deep understanding of both the local and Mainland accounting professions and international regulatory and compliance landscape. Well versed with the development needs of the sector at the same time, Ms Lai is committed to promoting the accounting and auditing quality in Hong Kong while supporting the development of the profession. We look forward to Ms Lai's contribution to laying a robust foundation of the AFRC as a regulatory body with newly expanded independent oversight functions as well as to driving the healthy and sustainable development of Hong Kong's accounting sector."

A selection panel, chaired by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, made the recommendation to the Chief Executive on the appointment following a global recruitment exercise. Members of the selection panel are Dr Kelvin Wong, Ms Miranda Kwok, Mr Wilson Fung and the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Financial Services).

Biography of Ms Janey Lai Chui-pik

Ms Janey Lai Chui-pik worked in Ernst & Young between 1993 and 2011, and assumed the position as Audit Partner of the firm from 2006 to 2011. She was a Partner and National Leader in Audit & Assurance Learning of Deloitte China between 2012 and 2022. In August 2022, she joined the AFRC as Head of Inspection, and has been appointed as an Executive Director to act as the CEO after the term of the former CEO came to a close in October 2023.

Temporary suspension of LCSD's Mobile Library 8 services

The services provided by Mobile Library 8 have been suspended until further notice for urgent repair works, a Leisure and Cultural Services Department spokesman announced today (April 9).

The affected service points are Laguna City in Lam Tin, On Tai Estate on Anderson Road, Po Tat Estate in Sau Mau Ping, Tai Hang Tung Estate on Tai Hang Tung Road, Laguna Verde in Hung Hom, Choi Fook Estate in Kowloon Bay and Yau Lai Estate in Yau Tong. For enquiries about Mobile Library 8 services, please call 2926 3055.

Readers are welcome to use other public libraries during the service suspension period. They may also renew library materials by telephoning 2698 0002 or 2827 2833, or via www.hkpl.gov.hk.

Hong Kong's latest foreign currency reserve assets figures released

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (April 9) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$423.6 billion as at the end of March 2024 (end-February 2024: US\$425.2 billion) (Annex).

Including unsettled foreign exchange contracts, the foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong at the end of March 2024 amounted to US\$423.1 billion (end-February 2024: US\$425.2 billion).

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$423.6 billion represent over five times the currency in circulation or about 40 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of April 2024, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

April 9	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
April 12	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
April 30	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
April 30	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Under Secretary for Health chairs

ninth meeting of Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding (with photos)

The Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, chaired the ninth meeting of the Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding today (April 9) to review with members of the Committee the progress and effectiveness of various measures for promoting and supporting breastfeeding as well as discuss ways to step up the efforts in supporting breastfeeding in the future.

At the meeting, representatives of the Department of Health (DH) reported to members of the Committee the findings of the latest Breastfeeding Survey (BF Survey). Although the last two surveys covering babies born in 2020 and 2022 respectively show a decline in the local breastfeeding rate (presumably due to the constraints posed on the support services and promotion in hospitals, Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) and the community due to various anti-epidemic measures implemented during the COVID-19 epidemic), the breastfeeding rate on hospital discharge still reached 85 per cent in 2022, marking a significant increase when compared to the 55 per cent recorded in 2000. During the same time frame, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding till 4 months of age rose from 8 per cent to 22 per cent. These reflected that the community is, in general, supportive of breastfeeding by virtue of the proactive and close collaboration between the Government and different sectors.

Dr Lee said, "Breastmilk offers very important nutrients to infants and young children, thereby reducing their risk of contracting serious complications while creating a protective health barrier for them. To go the extra mile at the policy level, the Chief Executive proposed in the 2023 Policy Address the initiative to establish a breastmilk bank and formulate the related mechanism for breastmilk donation in 2025 to provide breastmilk for infants and young children who cannot be breastfed by their biological mothers, with a view to benefitting the premature and severely ill babies in need."

Professional support from healthcare facilities is crucial to the effective advocacy and promotion of breastfeeding. At present, all eight public hospitals with obstetrics and gynaecology departments are accredited Baby-Friendly Hospitals (BFHs). Of the 28 MCHCs under the DH, three of them have been accredited as Baby-Friendly health facilities, whereas accreditation procedures have also commenced for the remaining 25 MCHCs. The MCHCs will formulate infant feeding policies and action plans, provide training for staff members, and keep on monitoring the implementation of breastfeeding support measures, etc. Apart from public healthcare institutions, the Government will also pursue to encourage private hospitals to start the BFH accreditation procedures so as to enhance the professional support of the healthcare institutions as a whole for breastfeeding families.

Representatives of the DH also reported to the Committee the latest progress of a series of initiatives for promoting breastfeeding, including publicity efforts for encouraging the implementation of the Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace policy and fostering the establishment of Breastfeeding Friendly Premises in public places to support breastfeeding mothers in breastfeeding their babies or lactation anytime and anywhere, strengthening the Peer Support Scheme for breastfeeding mothers, as well as setting up a working group under the Committee to reinforce and consolidate the breastfeeding-friendly practices in birthing hospitals.

In addition, since the Government's introduction of a mandatory requirement in the sale conditions of government land sale sites for new commercial developments in 2017 for developers to provide babycare rooms and lactation rooms (LRs), the Government has already included relevant requirements in the sale conditions for over 20 government land sales sites for new commercial developments as at March 31 this year. Meanwhile, the Government has also mandated the provision of babycare facilities and LR in some newly completed government premises. As of March 31 this year, there were more than 380 babycare rooms in government properties.

Dr Lee added, "The Government will continue to work closely with different sectors of the society and step up publicity for breastfeeding in the community through different channels in a bid to cultivate a stronger supportive culture to breastfeeding and create a breastfeeding-friendly environment. In particular, the Government will strengthen the professional support offered to breastfeeding mothers by the healthcare sector, including expediting the accreditation of Baby-Friendly health facilities."

Established in April 2014, the Committee comprises members from relevant healthcare professions and academia as well as representatives of organisations promoting breastfeeding. The Committee is responsible for providing recommendations on the strategies and action plans for further strengthening the promotion, protection and support for breastfeeding as well as overseeing the relevant progress, with a view to enhancing the sustainability of breastfeeding and advocating breastfeeding as the mainstream babycare mode to be widely accepted by the general public.

