

Hong Kong Customs combats traders supplying shortweight Ching Ming Festival products

From March 18 to 28, Hong Kong Customs conducted a territory-wide spot check with a view to combating traders supplying shortweight products before the Ching Ming Festival. In the test-buy and spot-check operation against roasted meat shops mounted across the territory, seven traders were found supplying suspected shortweight products.

During the operation, Customs officers inspected a total of 67 roasted meat shops in different districts, seven of which were found supplying siu mei products that were shortweighted with a range from 7.5 per cent to 20 per cent.

Investigations are ongoing.

Customs reminds consumers to purchase products from reputable shops and pay attention to the weighing process and the actual weight when the products are supplied by weight.

Under the Weights and Measures Ordinance (WMO), any person who in the course of trade supplies goods to another person by weight or measure should supply the goods in net weight or net measure. Any shortage of the quantity purporting to be supplied is an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$10,000. In addition, any person who uses for trade, or has in his possession for use for trade, any weighing or measuring equipment which is false or defective commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$25,000. Also, any person who fails to let customers have a clear view of readings of the weighing or measuring equipment is liable to a maximum penalty of a fine of \$5,000.

Customs will continue to take stringent enforcement action against shortweight activities during festivals to protect consumers' interests and uphold a fair trading environment.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the WMO to the 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).

Phishing emails related to Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited relating to phishing emails, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the emails concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Provisional statistics of retail sales for February 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (April 3).

The value of total retail sales in February 2024, provisionally estimated at \$33.8 billion, increased by 1.9% compared with the same month in 2023. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in January 2024 increased by 0.9% compared with a year earlier. For the first two months of 2024 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales increased by 1.4% compared with the same period in 2023.

Of the total retail sales value in February 2024, online sales accounted for 6.9%. The value of online retail sales in that month, provisionally estimated at \$2.3 billion, decreased by 9.9% compared with the same month in 2023. The revised estimate of online retail sales in January 2024 decreased by 21.2% compared with a year earlier. For the first two months of 2024 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of online retail sales decreased by 15.9% compared with the same period in 2023.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in February 2024 increased by 0.5% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in January 2024 decreased by 1.2% compared with a year earlier. For the first two months of 2024 taken together, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 0.4% in volume compared with the same period in 2023.

In interpreting these figures, it should be noted that retail sales tend to show greater volatility in the first two months of a year due to the timing of the Lunar New Year. Consumer spending in the local market normally attains a seasonal high before the Festival. As the Lunar New Year fell on February 10 this year but on January 22 last year, it is more appropriate to analyse the retail sales figures for January and February taken together in making year-on-year comparison.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing the combined total sales for January and February 2024 with the same period a year earlier, the value of sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts increased by 8.8%. This was followed by sales of other consumer goods not elsewhere classified (+10.7% in value); commodities in supermarkets (+1.0%); wearing apparel (+7.8%); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (+0.1%); medicines and cosmetics (+21.7%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (+4.8%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+20.1%); and furniture and fixtures (+2.9%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of electrical goods and other consumer durable goods not elsewhere classified decreased by 25.1% in the first two months of 2024 over the same period a year earlier. This was followed by sales of commodities in department stores (-3.0% in value); motor vehicles and parts (-9.9%); fuels (-14.5%); Chinese drugs and herbs (-21.9%); and optical shops (-9.4%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales decreased by 1.8% in the three months ending February 2024 compared with the preceding three-month period, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales decreased by 1.6%.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that taking the first two months of 2024 together, the value of retail sales rose modestly over a year earlier.

Looking ahead, the spokesman added that as handling capacity continues to recover and more mega events are staged, inbound tourism is expected to revive further and benefit the retail sector. Rising household income and the Government's initiatives in boosting consumption sentiment should also provide support, though changes in consumption patterns of residents and visitors will continue to pose challenges. The Government will continue to

monitor the situation.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures on value index and value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for January 2024 as well as the provisional figures for February 2024. The provisional figures on the value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet as well as the corresponding year-on-year changes for the first two months of 2024 taken together are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on value of online retail sales for January 2024 as well as the provisional figures for February 2024. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first two months of 2024 taken together are also shown.

Table 3 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for January 2024 as well as the provisional figures for February 2024. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first two months of 2024 taken together are also shown.

Table 4 shows the movements of the value and volume of total retail sales in terms of the year-on-year rate of change for a month compared with the same month in the preceding year based on the original series, and in terms of the rate of change for a three-month period compared with the preceding three-month period based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The classification of retail establishments follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

These retail sales statistics measure the sales receipts in respect of goods sold by local retail establishments and are primarily intended for gauging the short-term business performance of the local retail sector. Data on retail sales are collected from local retail establishments through the Monthly Survey of Retail Sales (MRS). Local retail establishments with and without physical shops are covered in the MRS and their sales, both through conventional shops and online channels, are included in the retail sales statistics.

The retail sales statistics cover consumer spending on goods but not on services (such as those on housing, catering, medical care and health services, transport and communication, financial services, education and entertainment) which account for over 50% of the overall consumer spending. Moreover, they include spending on goods in Hong Kong by visitors but exclude spending outside Hong Kong by Hong Kong residents. Hence they should not be regarded as indicators for measuring overall consumer spending.

Users interested in the trend of overall consumer spending should refer

to the data series of private consumption expenditure (PCE), which is a major component of the Gross Domestic Product published at quarterly intervals. Compiled from a wide range of data sources, PCE covers consumer spending on both goods (including goods purchased from all channels) and services by Hong Kong residents whether locally or abroad. Please refer to the C&SD publication "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly)" for more details.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080003&scode=530).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7400; E-mail: mrs@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan](#)

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on April 2 to noon today (April 3), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 205 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 40 124 samples of food imported from Japan (including 26 680 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 11 030 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

[Special traffic and transport arrangements in So Kon Po and Causeway Bay from this Friday to Sunday for Hong Kong Sevens 2024](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (April 3) reminded the public that the following special traffic and transport arrangements will be implemented in the vicinities of So Kon Po and Causeway Bay from this Friday (April 5) to Sunday (April 7), to facilitate the holding of rugby matches at the Hong Kong Stadium.

Road closure

The following road sections will be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic, and traffic diversions will be implemented at the commencement of the event and throughout the day until the closed roads reopen:

Date	Time	Details
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April 5 (Friday)	from about 7am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The section of Caroline Hill Road between Leighton Road and Cotton Path; • Keswick Street;
April 6 (Saturday)	from about 6.30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The section of Hysan Avenue westbound carriageway between Yun Ping Road and Hoi Ping Road; and • The section of Lee Garden Road between Lan Fong Road and Hysan Avenue (when necessary, except for Green Minibuses (GMB)).
April 7 (Sunday)	from about 7.30am	

In addition to the above-mentioned road closure, the following road sections will also be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic, and traffic diversions will be implemented at the closing of the event until the closed roads reopen:

Date	Time	Details
April 5 (Friday)	from about 8.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caroline Hill Road; • The section of Eastern Hospital Road between Caroline Hill Road and Cotton Path;
April 6 (Saturday)	from about 7.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cotton Path; • The northbound carriageway of Link Road (downhill);
April 7 (Sunday)	from about 7pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoi Ping Road; • Sunning Road; and • Leighton Road (when necessary).

The on-street parking spaces within the road closure areas and the taxi stand on Yun Ping Road will be suspended from 6am to 11.30pm daily from April 5 to 7.

Public transport service arrangements

In connection with the above road closure arrangements to be implemented throughout the day from the commencement of the event, the following bus routes operating in the affected areas will be subject to diversions and associated temporary stop relocations:

Date	Time	Details
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April 5 (Friday)	from about 7am to 8.29pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citybus route Nos. 5B and 8H will operate in a circular route mode; • The terminal point of Cross-harbour bus (XHT) route No. 678 (Sheung Shui-bound) will change from Eastern Hospital Road to Causeway Road outside the Victoria Park; • The terminals of Causeway Bay bound and Tsuen Wan (Shek Wai Kok) bound services of XHT route Nos. 936 and 936A will change from Cotton Path to Tung Lo Wan Road and and Moreton Terrace outside Bay View Mansion respectively; and • The bus stops at Tung Lo Wan Road southbound opposite St. Paul's Hospital (except for route Nos. 11, 25A, 26, 63 and 108) and Leighton Road westbound near Caroline Hill Road will be suspended.
April 6 (Saturday)	from about 6.30am to 7.29pm	
April 7 (Sunday)	from about 7.30am to 6.59pm	

In connection with the above road closure arrangements to be implemented at the closing of the event, the following bus, GMB and residents' service routes operating in the affected areas will be subject to diversions and associated temporary stop relocations:

Date	Time	Details
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April 5 (Friday)	from 8.30pm to 10.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citybus route Nos. 5B and 8H will omit Tung Lo Wan Road, Caroline Hill Road and Eastern Hospital Road; • XHT route No. 936 (Tsuen Wan (Shek Wai Kok) bound) will depart from Moreton Terrace outside Bay View Mansion instead of Cotton Path; • The bus stops at Tung Lo Wan Road southbound opposite St. Paul's Hospital (except for route Nos. 11, 25A, 26, 63 and 108) and Leighton Road westbound near Caroline Hill Road will be suspended; and • GMB route Nos. 14M and 30 and residents' service route No. HR51 (Causeway Bay bound) will be diverted via Wong Nai Chung Road instead of Link Road and GMB route No. 26 (Stubbs Road bound) will be diverted via Percival Street instead of Lee Garden Road.
April 6 (Saturday)	from 7.30pm to 9.30pm	
April 7 (Sunday)	from 7pm to 9pm	

Two special bus routes, namely route No. 25R (Causeway Bay (Leighton Road) to Central (Exchange Square)) and 976R (Causeway Bay (Moreton Terrace) to Yuen Long (San Tin)), will be operated at the closing of the event on each night. The number of trips and departure times will depend on the passenger demand and traffic conditions on-site.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected in the areas to guide motorists. The TD anticipates that the traffic in the vicinities of So Kon Po and Causeway Bay will be very congested and motorists are advised to avoid driving to the affected areas. Members of the public are advised to make use of public transport services as far as possible to avoid traffic congestion and unnecessary delays. During the event, the TD and the Police will closely monitor the traffic situation and the Police may adjust the traffic arrangements subject to the prevailing crowd and traffic conditions in the areas. Members of the public should pay attention to the latest traffic news through radio, television or the TD's mobile application "HKeMobility".

For details of the special traffic and public transport arrangements, members of the public may visit the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk); "HKeMobility" or passenger notices issued by the relevant public transport operators.

