

Three persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Three men were sentenced by the magistrates' courts today (September 30) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap 599C) (the Regulation).

The first two cases involved two men aged 61 and 79 respectively. They were earlier issued compulsory quarantine orders stating that they must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, they left the place of quarantine without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer on April 2 and May 9 respectively. They were charged with contravening sections 8(1) and 8(5) of the Regulation and were sentenced by the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today to imprisonment for five days respectively. The sentence for the 61-year old man was suspended for 12 months.

The third case involved a man aged 55, who was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he was intercepted by the Police at Yau Ma Tei on May 6 upon receipt of a report. An investigation revealed that he was permitted to leave his place of quarantine to receive medical treatment, nevertheless, he failed to return to the place of quarantine immediately after being discharged from the hospital and remained in a public area. He was charged with contravening sections 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 14 days.

Pursuant to the Regulation, starting from February 8, save for exempted persons, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap 599E), starting from March 19, all persons arriving from countries or territories outside China would also be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that breaching a compulsory quarantine order is a criminal offence that the Government will not tolerate, and solemnly reminded the public to comply with the Regulation. As of today, a total of 56 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to three months or a fine of \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.