

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (October 22):

Reporter: There is more tear gas being shot during the recent protests. Some people are concerned about the residue of tear gas in the street. Would the Government push out any measures or guidelines to the citizens or to the street cleansers on how they can tackle with those left tear gas?

Secretary for Food and Health: As I understand, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department colleagues would clean, for example, the streets after all these mass gatherings or after the firing of tear gas. Secondly, some of these workers working in the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department are outsourced workers, so the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has already issued guidelines to these outsourcing agencies to let them know the guidelines in cleaning and also what protective equipment they should provide to their workers.

Reporter: The peak flu season is coming. But, there are some citizens, especially parents and children, are concerning about wearing of masks. Would you be afraid that there is a possibility of flu outbreak in school or the society?

Secretary for Food and Health: The winter flu season is coming. The most important thing is to take vaccination for prevention. Other personal hygiene measures include wearing a mask, washing hands, not going to crowded places and not going to school or work if you are sick. Of course, I understand there are queries about the anti-mask law (Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation) and whether it will contradict wearing a mask from the public health perspective. I would like to say that the Regulation does not contradict mask-wearing for public health reasons. The law only focuses on people wearing masks during mass gatherings and sit-ins but not for health reasons. So for healthcare professionals working in hospitals as well as for patients and people who are wearing masks as a disease preventive measure, there is no contradiction.

Reporter: Is there a need for citizens to provide a medical certificate to prove that they have certain illness so that they can wear masks? What about those who want to wear a mask for precaution?

Secretary for Food and Health: What I have said earlier is the general principle. As for whether people who are wearing masks as a disease preventive measure will be arrested, we are not sure. But of course everyone will be given the opportunity to defend their case in that particular situation that you have described. The overall principle of the Regulation will not contradict public health measures.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)