

Two persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operation (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a joint enforcement operation with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) yesterday (August 11) in the vicinity of Mong Kok Road. ImmD Task Force and Foreign Domestic Helpers Special Investigation Section officers arrested two suspected illegal workers during the operation, who are foreign domestic helper women aged 44 and 47. They were suspected to have breached their condition of stay in Hong Kong by engaging in illegal hawking and selling food on a pedestrian footbridge. FEHD officers seized some hawker equipment and commodities in the vicinity that were suspected to have been abandoned.

An ImmD spokesman said, "A foreign domestic helper should only perform domestic duties for the employer specified in the Standard Employment Contract. The helper could not carry out any non-domestic work, or take up, or join or establish any business other than the contracted domestic work, whether paid or unpaid, in Hong Kong. Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him or her shall be guilty of an offence. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties."

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct an initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the ImmD officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter or temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments immediately.

