

Two persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Two persons were sentenced by magistrates' courts today (January 12) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) (the Regulation).

The first case involved a woman aged 23, who was issued a compulsory quarantine order when she entered Hong Kong on March 22, 2020, stating that she must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer, she tried to leave Hong Kong on the same day and was stopped by an immigration officer at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point. She was charged with contravening sections 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today to six days' imprisonment, suspended for one year.

The second case involved a man aged 22, who was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at a hotel for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he had taken off his wristband and left the place of quarantine on April 4, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with contravening sections 8(1), 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 14 days.

Pursuant to the Regulation, starting from December 25, 2020, all persons arriving at Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival at Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), starting from February 8, 2020, 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 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 sentences send 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 99 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to 14 weeks or a fine of up to \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.