

Two persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Two men were sentenced by magistrates' courts today (January 19) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) (the Regulation).

The first case involved a man aged 35, 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 left the place of quarantine on June 26, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with contravening sections 8(1) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was fined \$8,000 by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today.

The second case involved a man aged 37. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he had taken off his wristband and left the place of quarantine on August 23, 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 Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 15 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 103 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.