

Two persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Two men were sentenced by the magistrates' courts today (December 8) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (the Regulation).

The first case involved a man aged 41, 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 March 26 without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer and was stopped by an Immigration officer at Shenzhen Bay Control Point. He was charged with contravening Sections 8(1) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 14 days.

The second case involved a man aged 42. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he left the place of quarantine on April 27 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 sentenced by the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today to seven days' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months.

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 78 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.