

Two persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Two men were sentenced by the magistrates' courts today (December 29) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (the Regulation).

The first case involved a man aged 48, who was issued a compulsory quarantine order when he entered Hong Kong on August 13, stating that he must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer, he tried to leave Hong Kong on the same day and was stopped by an immigration officer at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point. He was charged with contravening sections 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 14 days.

The second case involved a man aged 27, 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 had taken off his wristband and left the place of quarantine twice without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with two counts of contravening sections 8(1) and 8(5) and one count of contravening sections 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for a total 14 weeks for the three charges.

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 December 25, all persons arriving in Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival in Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. 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 92 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 \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.