

# Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected smuggled high-value products (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs yesterday (August 29) conducted an anti-smuggling operation and seized about 30 000 suspected smuggled goods with an estimated market value of about \$2.71 million at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point and at a village house in San Tin. The seizure includes smart phones, integrated circuits, fountain pens and facial masks.

Customs earlier conducted an in-depth investigation on a smuggling syndicate and took enforcement action yesterday. Customs officers first intercepted three outbound private vehicles at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point and found a batch of suspected smuggled smart phones and fountain pens in false compartments of the vehicles.

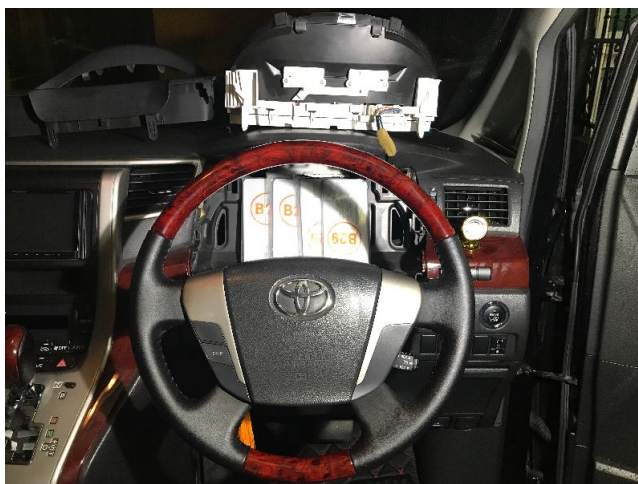
After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers seized another batch of smart phones, integrated circuits, fountain pens and facial masks at a village house in San Tin, which was used as a storage, and in a private vehicle parked outside the premises.

In the operation, five men and four women aged between 25 and 62 were arrested and four private vehicles were detained.

An investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



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## CHP investigates case of severe paediatric enterovirus infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 30) investigating a case of severe paediatric enterovirus (EV) infection, and again urged the public and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

The case involves a 3-month-old baby boy, with good past health, who presented with fever, cough, runny nose, decreased appetite and rash since August 20. He was taken to the Accident and Emergency Department of Tseung Kwan O Hospital for medical attention on the same day and was admitted for management. The patient's condition remained stable and he was discharged on August 25.

Laboratory tests of his cerebrospinal fluid specimen were positive for Coxsackievirus A6. The clinical diagnosis was meningitis.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had no recent travel history and his home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far. Investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said that as EV infection is transmitted by direct contact with nose and throat discharges, the public should be vigilant and observe the following preventive measures:

- Wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet and changing diapers;

- Cover the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing;
- Maintain good ventilation; and
- Thoroughly clean toys or appliances which are contaminated by nasal or oral secretions.

Children suffering from EV infection should stay at home and avoid contact with other children until they have recovered.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [hand, foot and mouth disease and EV71 infection](#) for more information.

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## Temporary closure of Kwai Shing Swimming Pool

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (August 30) that due to suspension of water supply resulting from a water pipe burst in the vicinity, Kwai Shing Swimming Pool in Kwai Tsing District has been temporarily closed until further notice.

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## Update on dengue fever and chikungunya fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 30) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF) and chikungunya fever (CF), and strongly urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

### A. Dengue fever

From August 23 to 29, the CHP recorded 11 imported DF cases. The patients had been to the Philippines (three cases, including two epidemiologically linked cases), Malaysia (two cases), Thailand (two cases), Cambodia (one case), India (one case), Sri Lanka (one case) and multiple

countries (one case, who had been to Laos and Thailand) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (August 29), 134 cases had been recorded this year, as compared with 92 cases recorded in the same period last year. All the cases recorded in 2019 were imported, mainly from Thailand (28), Malaysia (23) and Cambodia (19).

The CHP has been closely monitoring the latest DF situation in neighbouring and overseas areas. DF is endemic in many tropical and subtropical areas of the world. According to the World Health Organization, some Asian countries are experiencing unusually high numbers of DF cases for this time of year. The number of cases in several countries including Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam was about two to six times the number for the same period in 2018.

According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, Guangdong is currently in the epidemic season of DF. As of July 31, 796 cases have been recorded in Guangdong this year, which was significantly higher than that in the same period last year (121 cases). In Taiwan, 421 cases (including 75 local cases) have been recorded in 2019 (as of August 29). According to the health authority of Taiwan, the number of imported DF cases recorded so far this year was the highest compared to the number for the same period in the past 10 years.

Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas this year has been uploaded to the CHP's website

([www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df\\_imported\\_cases\\_and\\_overseas\\_figures\\_eng.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf)).

Members of the public should stay vigilant and carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

“Apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor,” a spokesman for the CHP said.

## B. Chikungunya fever

From August 23 to 29, the CHP recorded one CF case. The patient had been to Myanmar during the incubation period. As of yesterday (August 29), eight confirmed CF cases had been recorded this year, including six imported from Thailand and two imported from Myanmar.

CF is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the chikungunya virus. It is clinically characterised by fever frequently accompanied by joint pain. Other common signs and symptoms include muscle pain, headache, nausea, fatigue and a rash. Joint pain is often very debilitating, but usually lasts for a few days or may be prolonged for weeks. Most patients recover fully, but in some cases joint pain may persist for several months, or even years.

Chikungunya virus is transmitted to humans by mosquito bites. Although the vector *Aedes aegypti* is not found in Hong Kong, another vector, *Aedes albopictus*, is widely distributed locally. These mosquitoes can be found biting throughout daylight hours, though there may be peaks of activity in the early morning and late afternoon.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children\*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

\* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the [CF page](#) of the CHP, the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

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## Two illegal workers jailed

Two illegal workers comprising a Bangladeshi and a Pakistani were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (August 29) and today (August 30) respectively.

During a joint operation against illegal workers conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Labour Department codenamed "Rainbow" on July 24, officers of the ImmD General Investigation Section raided a food shop in Kwai Chung. One female Bangladeshi illegal worker, aged 39, was arrested. When intercepted, she was found working as a shop assistant. Upon identity checking, she produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits her from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that she was a non-refoulement claimant. Two employers suspected of employing the illegal worker were arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

Moreover, ImmD investigators received a referral from the Hong Kong Police Force to further investigate an illegal employment case in May. Enforcement officers arrested a male Pakistani worker, aged 36, conveying goods in Tai Po. Upon identity checking, he was found to be a holder of a recognisance form issued by ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment, and further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The two illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday and today with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charges and were sentenced to 15 months' and 18 months' imprisonment respectively.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully

employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

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 officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat 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, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.