

# Cake sample found to contain excessive Bacillus cereus

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (August 27) announced that a cake sample was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*, a pathogen. The CFS is following up on the case.

A CFS spokesman said, "Subsequent to announcing earlier that a cake sample taken from a bakery in Kwai Chung was found to contain an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus*, the CFS took another cake sample from the same bakery for testing during a follow-up investigation. A similar irregularity was detected, with the test result showing that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 660 000 per gram. Under the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, ready-to-eat food containing *Bacillus cereus* at a level of more than 100 000 per gram is considered unsatisfactory."

The spokesman said that the CFS had informed the vendor concerned of the unsatisfactory test result and the vendor has already stopped selling the product concerned according to CFS' instructions. The CFS has earlier provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the vendor concerned, and has requested them to carry out a thorough cleaning and disinfection. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence. The above-mentioned unsatisfactory sample was taken before the vendor carried out a thorough cleaning and disinfection.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

*Bacillus cereus* is commonly found in the environment. Unhygienic conditions in food processing and storage may give rise to its growth. Consuming food contaminated with excessive *Bacillus cereus* or its heat-stable toxins may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and diarrhoea.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action in order to safeguard public health and food safety.

---

## Coin Collection Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (August 27) announced a new service schedule of the two "Coin Carts" under the Coin Collection Programme, for the period from September 30 to December 1. The schedule and other details of the Programme are shown on the HKMA webpage ([coincollection.hkma.gov.hk](http://coincollection.hkma.gov.hk)).

Since the launch of the Programme in October 2014, the two Coin Carts have completed 26 cycles of serving the 18 districts on July 28, 2019. The Carts had carried out 623 000 transactions, collecting 507 million coins with a total face value of HK\$723 million during the period. The collected coins are re-circulated to meet demand.

The Coin Carts provide service at locations that are convenient to the public without affecting the normal flow of traffic and pedestrians. Locations that have suitable power supply facilities, such as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department mobile library service locations, are preferred so as to reduce the need for using the Coin Carts' own stand-by generators. This makes the Programme more environmentally friendly. In selecting the service locations, the HKMA has taken into consideration comments and suggestions given by district councils and members of public, and has consulted the Transport Department and the Hong Kong Police Force as necessary.

The two Coin Carts collect coins from members of public in the 18 districts of Hong Kong on a rotating basis. Under normal circumstances each Coin Cart will stay at a location for a week, subject to availability of the parking space and the maintenance schedule of the Cart. Service hours are from 10am to 7pm. Each vehicle is equipped with two coin counting machines and operational staff will be present to provide assistance. An electrical wheelchair lift is available for use. Users can choose to exchange coins for banknotes or adding value to their stored value facilities, such as Octopus Cards or e-wallets (including AlipayHK, Octopus 0! ePay, Tap & Go, TNG Wallet and WeChat Pay). There is also a Community Chest donation box inside each vehicle. The coin collection service is free of charge.

The HKMA will review the Programme from time and time and will regularly update the service schedule to give advance notice to the public.

---

## **Hong Kong Customs mounts special operation against unfair trade practices by fitness centres**

â€‹Hong Kong Customs has mounted a special operation codenamed "Tornado" since the end of last year against unfair trade practices by fitness centres.

Customs officers conducted enforcement actions in the past week and smashed three fitness centres in Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei. Eight persons were arrested after being suspected of having engaged in aggressive commercial practices in the course of selling fitness services in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). Around \$670,000 is involved in the service contracts.

Customs officers earlier received information alleging that staff members of three fitness centres in Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei imposed undue influence and used aggressive commercial practices when selling fitness services to customers, forcing them to procure fitness club membership.

Subsequent to an in-depth investigation, Customs officers took enforcement actions and arrested eight persons. Aged between 21 and 26, they comprise one director and seven salespersons of the fitness centres.

The operation is ongoing.

Until yesterday (August 26), 19 persons were arrested during the "Tornado" operation after being suspected of having engaged in aggressive commercial practices in the course of selling fitness services in contravention of the TDO. The arrested persons, aged between 21 and 43, comprise four directors and 15 salespersons of the fitness centres. A total of about \$1.8 million is involved in the service contracts.

The Group Head (Unfair Trade Practice Investigation), Ms Suzette Ip, said at a press conference today (August 27) that Hong Kong Customs will continue to step up enforcement to combat unfair trade practices by fitness centres.

She reminded traders that they must comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers are also reminded to procure services from reputable shops. Before making a purchase decision, consumers must not give their identity cards, credit cards or automated teller machine cards to salespersons. They must also refuse firmly to sign any paper if they do not fully understand the service and price details, or if they do not intend to make a purchase.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair a consumer's freedom of choice or conduct, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Stressing its priority given to consumer rights protection and zero tolerance for unfair trade practices, Hong Kong Customs pledges that it will continue its stringent enforcement actions against such practices by fitness centres.

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

---

## Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 27) closely monitoring nine additional cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by Saudi Arabia from July 1 to 31. The CHP again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, of the additional cases, eight were male patients and one was a female patient, with ages from 30 to 79. Among them, one had exposure to camels and consumed camel milk, seven had underlying illnesses and four have passed away.

According to the latest information, 2 458 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 849 deaths), including 2 239 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 2 067 in Saudi Arabia, 87 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 24 in Oman, 19 in Qatar, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"As countries in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, continue to report MERS cases from time to time, travellers should refrain from going to farms, barns or markets with camels and avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry. Most of the cases reported in the Middle East had a history of exposure to camels, consumption of camel milk or contact with other MERS patients," the spokesman said.

"Scientific evidence showed that camels are reservoirs for MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). Camels infected with MERS-CoV may not show any signs of infection. Infected animals may shed MERS-CoV through nasal and eye discharge and faeces, and potentially in their milk and urine. The virus may also be found in the raw organs and meat of infected animals. Therefore, the best protection is to practise good hygiene and avoid direct contact with all of these," the spokesman added.

From time to time, suspected MERS cases reported to the CHP for investigation involve patients with a history of contact with camels in the Middle East. The CHP strongly advises travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt

appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

---

## Exchange Fund Bills tender results

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

### Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: August 27, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1935
Issue date	: August 28, 2019
Maturity date	: November 27, 2019
Amount applied	: HK\$120,550 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$45,183 MN
Average yield accepted	: 2.18 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 2.20 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 74 PCT
Average tender yield	: 2.25 PCT

\*\*\*\*\*

Tender date	: August 27, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H1964
Issue date	: August 28, 2019
Maturity date	: February 26, 2020
Amount applied	: HK\$43,800 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$13,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 2.08 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 2.08 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 91 PCT
Average tender yield	: 2.16 PCT

---

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning September 2, 2019:

Tender date : September 3, 2019  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : Q1936  
Issue date : September 4, 2019  
Maturity date : December 4, 2019  
Tenor : 91 Days  
Amount on offer : HK\$50,367 MN

\*\*\*\*\*

Tender date : September 3, 2019  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : H1965  
Issue date : September 4, 2019  
Maturity date : March 4, 2020  
Tenor : 182 Days  
Amount on offer : HK\$12,000 MN

\*\*\*\*\*

Tender date : September 3, 2019  
Paper on offer : EF Bills  
Issue number : Y1994  
Issue date : September 4, 2019  
Maturity date : September 2, 2020  
Tenor : 364 Days  
Amount on offer : HK\$5,000 MN