

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit heat-not-burn products (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (August 22) seized about 50 000 suspected illicit heat-not-burn (HNB) products with an estimated market value of about \$140,000 and a duty potential of about \$100,000 at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA).

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Quanzhou, Fujian, yesterday night. During Customs clearance, the batch of suspected illicit HNB products was found inside his luggage.

The 27-year-old man was arrested for failing to declare HNB products in excess of the duty-free concession to a Customs officer.

Investigation is ongoing.

Up till July this year, 37 incoming passengers were arrested at HKIA for failing to make a declaration of HNB products in excess of the duty-free concession to Customs officers. About 900 000 suspected illicit HNB products with an estimated market value of about \$2.5 million and duty potential of about \$1.7 million were seized.

Customs reminds members of the public that under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO), tobacco is a dutiable good to which the DCO applies. Any HNB product containing tobacco in content is also a dutiable good subject to the control of the DCO. Any person who possesses, sells or buys dutiable commodities without a valid license commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may call Customs' hotline 2815 7711 regarding whether a specific tobacco or smoking product is under the regulation of the DCO. They may also report any suspected violation of the DCO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Appeal for information on missing girl in Tsuen Wan (with photo)

Police today (August 23) appealed to the public for information on a girl who went missing in Tsuen Wan.

Leung Wai-ki, aged 13, went missing after she left her residence in Shek Wai Kok Estate on July 24 afternoon. Her family made a report to Police on July 28.

She is about 1.57 metres tall, 36 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a long face with yellow complexion and long black hair. She was last seen wearing a black and white dress with floral pattern and red shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing girl or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1176 or 9689 7445 or email to rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



HAD to open temporary night heat

shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (August 23) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2835 1473.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate
Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –
Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre

Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as either community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community and cannot continue to be open as heat shelters. People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas in any of the 20 designated community centres or community halls. Their opening hours are from 9am to 10pm. For addresses of the community centres or community halls, please browse the following webpage:

www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (August 23) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches that are open for swimming and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay*).

Twenty-one beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 16 as Fair (Grade 2) and two as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach | Middle Bay Beach |
| Chung Hom Kok Beach | Repulse Bay Beach |
| Clear Water Bay First Beach | Shek O Beach |
| Clear Water Bay Second Beach | South Bay Beach |
| Deep Water Bay Beach | St Stephen's Beach |
| Discovery Bay | Stanley Main Beach |
| Hap Mun Bay Beach | Tong Fuk Beach |
| Hung Shing Yeh Beach | Trio Beach |
| Kiu Tsui Beach | Turtle Cove Beach |
| Kwun Yam Beach | Upper Cheung Sha Beach |
| Lo So Shing Beach | |

Grade 2 beaches are:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Anglers' Beach | Kadoorie Beach |
| Approach Beach | Lido Beach |
| Butterfly Beach | Lower Cheung Sha Beach |

Cafeteria New Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach
Casam Beach
Golden Beach
Hoi Mei Wan Beach

Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Pui O Beach
Silver Mine Bay Beach
Silverstrand Beach
Ting Kau Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach

Castle Peak Beach

* Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

Compared with the grading released last week, Deep Water Bay Beach and Middle Bay Beach have been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, Approach Beach and Silver Mine Bay Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Silverstrand Beach has been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, including Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Twenty-three immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a territory-wide anti-illegal

worker operation codenamed "Twilight" from August 19 to 22. A total of 18 illegal workers and five suspected employers were arrested.

During the operation, ImmD Task Force officers raided 57 target locations including a beach, car parks, companies, a factory, a garbage collection depot, massage parlours, a residential building, restaurants and a warehouse. The illegal workers comprised seven men and 11 women, aged 23 to 61. Among them, one man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment. In addition, three women were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Meanwhile, three men and two women, aged 47 to 61, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The 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. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

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 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 the 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.