

Exercise “Zircon” tests Government’s response against Legionnaires’ Disease (with photos)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), in collaboration with other government departments and organisations, today (April 30) held a public health exercise code-named "Zircon" to test the preparedness against Legionnaires’ Disease (LD).

The exercise was conducted in a purpose-built housing block for the elderly and aimed at strengthening the inter-departmental response and collaboration mechanism in regard to the occurrence of LD, evaluating the effectiveness of the DH’s standard operating procedures on LD, and enhancing awareness among stakeholders on the prevention and control of an outbreak of LD.

About 50 people from relevant government departments and organisations participated in the exercise, with 31 experts from the Mainland and Macao health authorities attending as observers. The exercise consisted of two parts. The first part was a table-top exercise conducted on April 12, in which relevant departments and organisations discussed and co-ordinated the response measures required in a simulated scenario of detection of two cases of LD in the same housing block.

The second part, conducted today, was a ground movement exercise. Under the exercise simulation, the CHP was notified by the Hospital Authority of two confirmed cases of LD. The DH conducted immediate epidemiological investigations which revealed that both patients were elderly people residing in the same housing block who had used the jacuzzi there during the incubation period. The CHP co-ordinated with relevant government departments and organisations to conduct a site visit, collect water and environmental samples from potential sources of infection for testing, and advise on relevant infection control measures.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water

spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," a spokesman for the DH said.

"This exercise provided a valuable opportunity to test the preparedness of relevant government departments and organisations to respond effectively in the occurrence of an infectious disease outbreak. It also helped refine the response plans for communicable diseases and revealed room for improvement," the spokesman added.



Missing man in Mong Kok located

A man who went missing in Mong Kok has been located.

Yeung Kwok-che, aged 81, went missing after he was last seen at MTR Prince Edward Station on April 27 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on April 28.

The man returned to his residence this afternoon (April 30). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

CHP notified of case of imported Zika Virus Infection in Guangdong

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (April 30) announced an imported case of Zika Virus Infection reported in Guangdong, which was notified by the Health Commission of Guangdong Province yesterday (April 29), and again urged the public to adopt strict anti-mosquito measures and safe sex during travel. Pregnant women and those planning pregnancy should not travel to [areas with ongoing Zika virus transmission](#) (affected areas).

The male patient aged 21 returning from Thailand arrived at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport on April 26. He was detected as febrile with cough and headache upon arrival. The case was laboratory confirmed subsequently and he was under isolation and management in stable condition.

The CHP's Port Health Office (PHO) has introduced a requirement on aircraft disinsection for all inbound aircraft from Zika-affected areas since April 2017 to prevent importation of diseases through infected mosquitoes. The PHO has also stepped up inspection and health promotion at boundary control points (BCPs) to maintain strict environmental hygiene with effective mosquito control.

"Routine health surveillance on body temperature of inbound travellers at all BCPs is ongoing. However, infected persons are mainly asymptomatic. Therefore, we urge those arriving from Zika-affected areas to apply insect repellent for at least 21 days upon arrival to reduce the risk of transmission," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"We are maintaining close liaison with the World Health Organization as well as overseas, neighbouring and Mainland health authorities to closely monitor the latest developments," the spokesman added.

Apart from [general measures on preventing mosquito bites and mosquito breeding](#), the public should take heed of the advice listed below:

A. Travelling abroad

- If going to affected areas, travellers, especially persons with immune disorders or severe chronic illnesses, should arrange a consultation with doctor at least six weeks before the trip, and have extra preventive measures to avoid mosquito bites;
- During the trip, if travelling in rural affected areas, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin (an insecticide) on it. Permethrin should not be applied to skin. Seek medical attention promptly if feeling unwell; and

- Travellers who return from affected areas should apply insect repellent for at least 21 days after arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell e.g. having fever, should seek medical advice promptly, and provide travel details to doctor.

B. Sexual transmission

- Travellers should consider not having sex during travel to affected areas, or else condom should be used; and
- Male and female travellers returning from affected areas should abstain from sex for at least three months and at least two months respectively upon return, or else condom should be used.

C. Pregnant women

- Pregnant women and women preparing for pregnancy should not travel to affected areas. Use of mosquito repellent containing DEET during travel and returning from these areas for a period of at least 21 days are advised for all travellers including pregnant women;
- attend antenatal follow up regularly and tell the attending doctor history of recent travel;
- observe for symptoms of Zika virus infection and seek medical advice as soon as possible if feeling unwell; and
- abstain from sex with her partner who had travelled to affected areas, or else condom should be used throughout the pregnancy.

The public may visit the Zika pages of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the [Outbound Travel Alert](#) page of the Security Bureau and [anti-mosquito precautions for women](#) for more information.

[Appeal for information on missing woman in Wong Tai Sin \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (April 30) appealed to the public for information on a woman who went missing in Wong Tai Sin.

Yiu Yuk-ying, aged 65, went missing after she was last seen on Yuk Wah Street on April 26 night. Staff of her elderly home made a report to Police on the next day (April 27).

She is about 1.6 metres tall, 58 kilograms in weight and of fat build.

She has a round face with yellow complexion and short white hair. She was last seen wearing a dark red vest, a red long-sleeved shirt and dark trousers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon East on 3661 0316 or 9886 0060 or email to rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[LegCo Subcommittee visits transitional housing projects \(with photos\)](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Subcommittee to Follow Up Issues Related to Inadequate Housing and Relevant Housing Policies visited the Lok Sin Tong (LST) Social Housing Scheme and a pilot project for conversion of school premises into transitional housing today (April 30) to better understand the latest progress of the projects.

Accompanied by the Under Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, and the Chairlady of LST Benevolent Society, Kowloon, Dr Yang Xiao-ling, Members visited the premises of LST Social Housing Scheme. Members observed the common area of the premises and then visited the families to learn about their living conditions. Members also received a briefing by representatives of the Government and LST on the experience and challenge of operating the "Transitional Housing Scheme".

After that, Members visited LST Primary School, which will be converted into transitional housing after its closure in August this year. It is expected that around 50 housing units could be provided. During the visit, Members observed the school's environment and were briefed on the details of the conversion plan.

Members participating in the visit included the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr Vincent Cheng; the Deputy Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr Andrew Wan; and Subcommittee member Ms Chan Hoi-yan.

