

# Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (August 24) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Nineteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 19 as Fair (Grade 2) and one as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Cafeteria New Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	South Bay Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Trio Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach
Lower Cheung Sha Beach	

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Approach Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Lido Beach
Butterfly Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Pui O Beach
Casam Beach	Shek O Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Discovery Bay	Ting Kau Beach
Golden Beach	

Grade 3 beaches are:

Castle Peak Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, Silverstrand Beach has

been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1. Cafeteria Old Beach and Deep Water Bay Beach have 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 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 websites on Beach Water Quality ([www.beachwq.gov.hk](http://www.beachwq.gov.hk) and [www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, August 24, 2018 is 104.4 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

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## **Test results of seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes (first phase) all satisfactory**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 24) announced the results of a seasonal food surveillance project on mooncakes (first phase). The results of 160 samples tested were all satisfactory.

A spokesman for the CFS said that samples of over 20 brands covering traditional, snowy, ice-cream and other types of mooncakes had been collected from various retailers (including online retailers) and food factories for

chemical and microbiological tests and nutrition content analysis.

The chemical tests covered colouring matters such as Sudan dyes, preservatives such as sulphur dioxide and sorbic acid, aflatoxins and metallic contaminants. Microbiological tests covered pathogens such as *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Salmonella* and coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms. For nutrition content analysis, the contents of sodium and total fat of the samples were tested to see if they were consistent with the declared values on the nutrition labels.

The spokesman reminded people to maintain a balanced diet and avoid excessive eating of mooncakes as they are generally high in sugar and fat. Some types also contain relatively high levels of salt. Eating too much fat will increase the risk of being overweight and obese while dietary sugar intake is a determinant of body weight and dental caries. In addition, excessive sodium intake will increase the risk of developing hypertension, fatal stroke and coronary heart disease.

He advised people to refer to nutrition labels, particularly on the sugar, salt and fat contents, to make a healthier choice. People should avoid mooncake types with high levels of fat or sugar, i.e. containing more than 20 grams of total fat or more than 15g of sugar per 100g of food. As for reducing salt intake, people can choose low-sodium mooncake types, i.e. containing less than 120 milligrams of sodium per 100g of food.

He said that people should consider their health conditions and consume mooncakes in an appropriate amount during the Mid-Autumn Festival. He advised people to share mooncakes with their family members and friends, as this not only enhances the festive atmosphere, but also allows them to taste mooncakes of different flavours and avoid overconsumption.

Members of the public should observe the following Five Keys to Food Safety in the purchase, storage and consumption of mooncakes to prevent food-borne diseases:

- \* Buy mooncakes from reliable outlets rather than patronising unlicensed hawkers. Check whether the mooncakes are properly packaged, pay attention to the expiry dates before purchase and eat them before the expiry dates;
- \* Store mooncakes according to the instructions on the package if they are not to be consumed immediately. Keep snowy mooncakes at 4 degrees Celsius or below and ice-cream mooncakes at minus 18 degrees C or below, and consume them as soon as possible after taking them out from the refrigerator;
- \* Use an icebox to carry snowy or ice-cream mooncakes outdoors and consume them as soon as possible;
- \* Wrap mooncakes properly and separate them from raw food when storing in a refrigerator to prevent cross-contamination; and
- \* Maintain good personal hygiene. Wash hands properly with liquid soap and

running water before handling mooncakes.

The spokesman also reminded food traders to adhere to the Good Manufacturing Practice. Other than purchasing food ingredients from reliable suppliers, they should also comply with legal requirements when using food additives.

"Snowy and ice-cream mooncakes, which do not undergo a baking process at high temperature, need to be handled hygienically during processing, transportation and storage to avoid contamination and growth of germs," he said.

The CFS will continue to conduct surveillance on mooncakes and the second phase results will be released in a timely manner to ensure food safety.

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## Health risk category for Air Quality Health Index may reach "Serious" Level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal pollution levels. At 2pm today (August 24), the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at a general station reached 8, corresponding to the "Very High" health risk category.

There are sunny periods with light winds in Hong Kong today. Higher than normal levels of nitrogen dioxide have been recorded in the territory since this morning. Hong Kong is being affected by an air mass with higher background pollutant concentrations. In addition, the light wind hinders effective dispersion of air pollutants. The sunshine enhances photochemical smog activity and the formation of ozone and fine particulates, resulting in high pollution in the Pearl River Delta region. The high level of ozone has promoted the formation of nitrogen dioxide, particularly in parts of the urban areas and at the roadside. It is expected that the AQHI at some general and roadside air monitoring stations may reach the "Serious" level later today.

According to the Hong Kong Observatory, there will still be light winds for a couple of days. It is expected that pollution levels will remain higher than normal until the wind strengthens early next week.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" range or above, children, the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public are advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time staying outdoors,

especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from health-care professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website ([www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html)) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB's website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows:  
[www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html).

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings at the EPD's website ([www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html](http://www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html)) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.

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## **Eight immigration offenders arrested (with photo)**

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide enforcement operation codenamed "Twilight" and a joint operation codenamed "Windsand" with the Hong Kong Police Force yesterday (August 23) to combat illegal employment activities. A total of seven illegal workers and a suspected employer were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided two target locations including a restaurant and an industrial unit under renovation. Three illegal workers and an employer were arrested. The illegal workers comprised two men and one woman, aged 24 to 44. The woman was also suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity card. Meanwhile, the male employer, aged 50, was suspected of employing the illegal workers.

Furthermore, during operation "Windsand", four Mainland visitors comprising two men and two women, aged 22 to 42, were arrested for breaching their conditions of stay by being involved in suspected parallel goods trading at Ka Fu Close and San Wan Road in Sheung Shui. The goods included

electronic products, food, daily necessities and skin-care products.

Since September 2012, a number of "Windsand" operations have been conducted, during which a total of 3 434 Mainlanders and 19 Hong Kong residents were arrested for suspected involvement in parallel goods trading. Of these, 237 Mainlanders were prosecuted for breach of conditions of stay, while the remaining 3 197 people were repatriated. Among those prosecuted, 226 were sentenced to imprisonment for four weeks to three months, while charges were withdrawn for the other 11 people.

"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 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 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, as a standard procedure, will 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 exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

