

Employer fined for violation of safety legislation

Centuryan Services Limited was fined \$50,000 at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (June 25) for violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on September 21, 2017, in Hung Hom. While a worker was carrying out pest control work on the roof of a residential building, he fell to death from the unprotected roof edge to the podium floor.

Company directors sentenced to community service for wage offences and default on Labour Tribunal award

Two directors of Bexpress Internet Logistics (Hong Kong) Limited were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay employees' wages and defaulting on the sums awarded by the Labour Tribunal (LT) as required by the Employment Ordinance (EO). The two directors pleaded guilty at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts earlier and both were ordered to pay a sum of about \$134,000 via the court to the four employees. The directors were each sentenced to 80 hours' community service today (June 25).

The company failed to pay two employees wages within seven days after the termination of employment. The company also failed to pay four employees (including the above-mentioned two employees) the awarded sum of about \$134,000 in total within 14 days after the date set out by the terms of the LT award in accordance with the EO. The directors concerned were convicted for their consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the time limit stipulated in the EO and the awarded sums according to the terms of the awards of LT or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board. The LD will not tolerate these offences and will continue to make dedicated efforts in enforcing the EO and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," a spokesman for LD said.

Update on cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases in Tuen Mun Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) carriers in a female orthopaedic and traumatology ward, the spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital made the following update today (June 25):

In accordance with the prevailing infection control guidelines, the hospital has performed contact tracing and one more 51-year-old female patient was confirmed as a VRE carrier without clinical symptoms. She is still hospitalised and is in a stable condition.

The hospital will continue with enhanced infection control measures and will closely monitor the situation on the ward. The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (June 25) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From June 17 to 23, one community-acquired case and one imported LD case were reported. Both patients have underlying illnesses.

The first patient, a 57-year-old man, lives in Tower 3, the Capitol, Lohas Park, Tseung Kwan O, while the second patient, a 59-year-old man, was residing in the Mainland during the incubation period.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of June 23, 26 LD cases have been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"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," the spokesman said.

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.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filter is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to

clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2-µm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Home Ownership Scheme applicant convicted by court for false statement

An applicant for the purchase of a flat under the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) was sentenced to a community service order of 80 hours today (June 25) for making a statement to the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) on the declaration form which he knew to be false or misleading as to a material particular by not declaring the net asset value of his non-residential property to the Housing Department (HD).

In this case, the defendant, who applied for the purchase of a flat under the HOS by White Form in 2016, did not declare the net asset value of his land or landed properties on a declaration form. However, the HD found that he actually held a non-residential property jointly with a third party in the declaration period. Having considered his joint ownership of the said property, his concealed asset value was around \$1.4 million. He was later prosecuted by the HD for making a statement to the HA which he knew to be false or misleading as to a material particular, contrary to Section 26(2) of the Housing Ordinance. The defendant was convicted at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts on May 28. The magistrate considered a fine as punishment could not reflect the gravity of the offence. After making reference to the probation report, the defendant was sentenced to a community service order of 80 hours today.

An HD spokesman said that the HD always spares no effort in combating

false declaration made during application for subsidised housing. He reminded all subsidised sale flats applicants of the legislative requirements whereas if they make statements to the HA which they know to be false or misleading as to a material particular, contrary to Section 26(2) of the Housing Ordinance, they shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of \$500,000 and to imprisonment for one year. If they have already purchased and completed the assignment of the subsidised sale flats, pursuant to Section 26B of the Housing Ordinance, the court may order the purchasers to forfeit to the Housing Authority a sum equivalent to the difference between the original purchase price of the flat and the market value at the date of the order. If the estate in which the subsidised sale flat is located is incomplete, the HA may rescind the Agreement for Sale and Purchase previously signed with the purchasers and forfeit the deposit paid by them in accordance with the related clause therein.