

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case related to wild mushrooms

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 12) investigating a suspected case of food poisoning related to the consumption of wild mushrooms, and urged the public not to pick and eat wild mushrooms.

The three patients, a man and two women aged 37 to 58, developed symptoms including abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting about two to three hours after consuming mushrooms at home yesterday (June 11). They attended the Accident and Emergency Department of United Christian Hospital on the same day and did not require hospitalisation. They are in stable condition.

Initial investigations revealed that the patients had consumed wild mushrooms picked from the roadside near Laguna Park in Kwun Tong yesterday. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

"Members of the public should not pick wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms like profuse sweating, hallucination, coma or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," he added.

"If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification," the spokesman said.

Company fined for illegal club operations

A company was fined \$6,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 12) for contravening the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance.

The courts heard that in October last year, officers from the Office of

the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department conducted inspections at a club on Yee Wo Street in Causeway Bay which had been operating with a certificate of compliance (CoC).

The OLA officers posed as customers and patronised the club for drinks without being asked to show their membership status or being invited to join the club as members. Also, the staff of the club failed to show the registered drawings upon the OLA officers' request. Conditions 17 and 19 of the CoC were breached.

The company, being the CoC holder of the club, was charged with contravening section 21(2) of the Ordinance.

A spokesman for the department reminded all CoC holders to comply with the conditions as stipulated therein. Enforcement action would continue to be taken against illegal club operations.

Manager of unlicensed guesthouse fined

A woman was fined \$8,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (June 12) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in November last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Queen's Road East in Wan Chai. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service to hold hearing to receive oral evidence from invited parties

The following is issued on behalf of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service:

The Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service will hold a hearing to receive oral evidence from nominated representatives of the New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited next Tuesday (June 19) from 10am to 5.30pm (with a break between 1pm and 2.30pm) at the Auditorium of the Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar. The Committee's rules of procedure for the receipt of oral evidence and notice to the public attending the hearing to receive oral evidence are available on the Committee's website (www.irc-bus.gov.hk/eng/press.html).

Having received and considered written submissions from various interested parties, and in order to obtain further information, the Committee is in the process of inviting specific interested parties to give oral evidence to the Committee through nominated representatives. Three hearings have been held so far to receive oral evidence from representatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Transport Department and the New World First Bus Services Limited and Citybus Limited. A transcript of that evidence (and a translation in Chinese) is available on the Committee's website (www.irc-bus.gov.hk/eng/transcripts.html).

The Committee wishes to invite family members of the victims and passengers on board the bus involved in the fatal incident on Tai Po Road, and other recent serious incidents involving franchised bus services, to attend the hearing, and invites them to contact the Secretariat in advance of the hearing if they wish to attend. Except for seats reserved for such persons as well as the media and specifically identified interested parties, all available seats in the Auditorium of the Central Government Offices will be open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. A registration counter will open at 9.30am on June 19.

Enquiries regarding the hearings may be directed to the Secretariat of the Committee at 2867 5324.

Proposed guidelines for Rural Representative Election released for public consultation

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

The Electoral Affairs Commission today (June 12) released for public consultation the proposed guidelines on election-related activities in respect of the Rural Representative Election. The public consultation period will last for 30 days until July 11.

Speaking at a press conference today, the Commission Chairman, Mr Justice Barnabas Fung Wah, said, "The proposed guidelines were drawn up by the Commission for the rural ordinary election to be held in January next year and the rural by-elections to be held afterwards. They are prepared on the basis of the existing guidelines for the Rural Representative Election, with suitable alterations to reflect the amendments made to the relevant electoral legislation. The proposed guidelines also include elaboration on certain parts of the guidelines, with most of the amendments seeking to align the content with the other electoral guidelines."

A total of 1 484 Village Representatives, comprising 695 Resident Representatives and 789 Indigenous Inhabitant Representatives, will be returned for 709 villages in the next rural ordinary election. In addition, 39 and 17 Kaifong Representatives will be returned for the market towns (MTs) of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau respectively.

"One of the major amendments in the proposed guidelines is to set out clearly the residence requirement for registration as electors for existing villages (EVs) and MTs, and change in eligibility for registration upon change of the electors' principal residential address. An elector must be a resident of the village or MT for the three years immediately before applying to be registered. In addition, the elector must keep residing in the village or MT so registered. Otherwise, he/she is no longer eligible to remain registered as an elector. Even though his/her name is still on the valid final registers, the person concerned will commit an offence if he/she votes at the election," Mr Justice Fung said.

"In order to maintain the accuracy of the final registers, the electors should report to the Home Affairs Department any change of their principal residential address, especially for moving out of the EV or MT, in a timely manner in pursuance of their civic responsibilities," he said.

The proposed guidelines also specify the requirement to submit documentary evidence proving the principal residential address upon an application for change of that address by an elector for EVs or MTs. If the new principal residential address is within the boundary of the same village

or MT, the elector needs to submit address proof issued within the last three months. However, if the elector has moved to another EV or MT, he/she must submit documentary evidence proving that he/she has been a resident of that village or MT for at least three years immediately before making the application. The statutory deadline for electors to report on change of principal particulars has been advanced to June 16 in each year. The Electoral Registration Officer will also take checking measures as appropriate.

In addition, the proposed guidelines set out precisely the types of documents that an elector must produce, typically a Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card, before a ballot paper can be issued to him/her.

In the proposed guidelines, candidates are reminded of the need of apportionment of expenses between election-related purposes and any other purposes. The deadlines for submitting the election return for all candidates in the same election have also been aligned. In addition, candidates are also reminded to adopt measures to safeguard the personal data of electors.

The proposed guidelines can be downloaded from the Commission's website (www.eac.gov.hk). They are also available at the Registration and Electoral Office and the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of District Offices.

Written representations can be sent to the Commission's Secretariat by post to 10/F, Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Road, Wan Chai; by fax to 2511 1682; or by email to eacenq@reo.gov.hk before the deadline. Late submissions will not be considered.

A public forum will be held from 7pm to 8pm on June 21 at Lung Hang Estate Community Centre, Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin. Members of the public are invited to attend to express their views.

For enquiries, please call 2891 1001.