

Successful prosecutions against illegal construction waste disposal by EPD following public report

Four renovation and construction workers and contractors, who illegally deposited a large amount of construction waste and bamboo poles on the roadside of Minden Avenue in Tsim Sha Tsui last November, were fined a total of \$20,000 at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (May 31) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) received a public report last November that some waste had been illegally deposited on the roadside of Minden Avenue in Tsim Sha Tsui. The total volume of the waste was about five cubic meters, causing obstruction to the pavement. The member of the public also provided a video recording he captured during the incident to assist the EPD's investigation. With the licence plate information captured and the reported information, the EPD were able to trace the four persons involved. After evidence gathering, they were prosecuted in accordance with the WDO.

It is unethical and unlawful to dispose of construction waste in public places or on the roadside. An EPD spokesman reminded those involved in building renovation, construction works and transportation sector that they should dispose of construction waste properly in accordance with the law. Reusable materials or waste with a recycling value should be collected by recyclers, while non-recyclable waste should be delivered to appropriate waste management facilities, such as public fill banks or landfills, for proper treatment or disposal. Under the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to dispose of waste in public places. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.

The spokesman urged members of the public to report to the department if they witness any vehicle illegally dispose of waste. They can report the case by providing videos or photos or call the EPD departmental hotline at 2838 3111 to help combat illegal dumping.

CFS announces food safety report for April

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (May 31) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 11 000 food samples tested were satisfactory except for four samples. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 900 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, some 2 400 samples were taken for chemical tests and the remaining 7 700 (including about 7 200 taken from food imported from Japan) were collected to test radiation levels.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygienic indicators, while the chemical tests included pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others.

The samples comprised about 2 900 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; 600 samples of meat and poultry and their products; 1 700 samples of aquatic and related products; 600 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; 700 samples of cereals, grains and their products; and 4 500 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The four unsatisfactory samples comprised two vegetable samples detected with pesticide residues exceeding the legal limits and two popsicle samples found to contain total bacterial counts exceeding the legal limit.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples, including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

Since the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) came into effect on August 1, 2014, as of April 30 this year, the CFS has taken over 141 800 food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose before harvesting. The maximum residue limits (MRLs) of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The spokesman also reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

Basic Law Roving Exhibition to be held this Saturday and Sunday

A Basic Law roving exhibition organised by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau will be held this Saturday and Sunday (June 2 and 3) in West Kowloon.

In addition to an exhibition introducing the content and implementation of the Basic Law, members of the public may also gain a better understanding of the Basic Law by participating in computer and stall games.

The roving exhibition will be held at the Central Atrium, G/F, Olympian City 2, 18 Hoi Ting Road, West Kowloon, from 11am to 7pm. Admission is free.

Government establishes Commission on Children

The Government announced today (May 31) the establishment of the Commission on Children, with the Chief Secretary for Administration as the Chairperson and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare as the Vice-chairperson, as well as the appointments of 21 non-official and nine ex-officio members for a term of two years, from June 1, 2018, to May 31, 2020.

As announced in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address, the Government planned to set up the Commission in mid-2018 to amalgamate the efforts made by relevant bureaux/departments and child concern groups, and focus on addressing children's issues as they grow. To this end, the Government established a Preparatory Committee chaired by the Chief Executive in 2017, and conducted a series of public engagement activities to canvass public views extensively, including those of children, on the establishment of the Commission.

The Commission will commence operation tomorrow (June 1). Its target group will cover children aged below 18, with a focus on children aged 14 or below. According to the Preparatory Committee's proposal, the Commission may consider covering issues including the following in its initial work plan: children's education needs (including the assistance for special education needs and the handling of absentee students), initiatives for ethnic minority children (including the learning of Chinese as a second language), children's healthy development (including their medical needs and mental health), protection of children (including the prevention of violence/neglect, social work service for pre-school children and primary school students) and the arrangement of compiling data on children.

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, said, "Children's growth and development is one of the priority policy areas of the current-term Government. The Commission will be an ongoing, action-oriented, responsive and high-level body that will drive the work for the benefit of children through policy formulation as well as co-ordination and follow-up on the implementation of measures. The Commission will listen to children's views, and will enhance its transparency by issuing information through its website and to the media, etc."

The Commission comprises non-official members from different sectors, including education, healthcare, academia, child concern groups, legal, arts and sports, community service, public relations/media, parents, non-Chinese speaking/ethnic minorities and children/youths.

"Non-official members of the Commission are highly representative and include experts and stakeholders involved in matters concerning children's growth and development. I am confident that the Commission will provide valuable advice to the Government on the wide-ranging issues of concern to children and reflect children's voices effectively. I look forward to working closely with all the members to jointly promote children's growth and development in Hong Kong," Mr Cheung said.

The terms of reference of the Commission are:

With a vision of ensuring that Hong Kong is a place where the rights, interests and well-being of all children are respected and safeguarded and their voices are heard, and where all children enjoy healthy and happy growth and optimal development so as to achieve their fullest potential, the Commission on Children will:

1. Develop policies, set strategies and priorities related to the development and advancement of children, and oversee their implementation;
2. Enhance and monitor integration and rationalisation of children-related policies and initiatives under different bureaux/departments and with advisory bodies;
3. Review children-related services by the Government and non-governmental organisations, foster cross-sector collaboration, and identify areas for better integration and improvement;
4. Promote and promulgate children's rights as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and engage with children on matters that affect them;
5. Manage funding schemes for promotional and public educational projects which should have children's and stakeholders' participation, and organise other promotional activities; and
6. Develop a framework with indicators to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the vision is achieved.

Two Working Groups will be set up under the Commission to undertake specific areas of work. The two Working Groups are:

1. Working Group on Research; and
2. Working Group on Public Engagement, Education and Publicity.

In addition, the Commission can set up ad hoc task forces in respect of specific issues/matters.

The first meeting of the Commission will be held in June.

The membership of the Commission is as follows:

Chairperson

Chief Secretary for Administration

Vice-chairperson

Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Non-official Members

Mr Peter Au Yeung Wai-hong

Miss Bakar Fariha Salma Deiya

Miss Cheng Hui-kiu

Ms Janus Cheng Pui-wai

Mr Chow Wai-chung

Ms Kathy Chung Lai-kam

Mr Dennis Ho Chi-kuen

Dr Patrick Ip

Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan

Mr Edwin Lee

Mrs Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun-kai

Ms Shalini Mahtani

Mr Kenny Ng Kwan-lim

Dr Halina Poon Suk-han

Ms Susan So Suk-yin

Ms Michelle Tam Chi-yun

Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man

Mr Gary Wong Chi-him

Dr Lilian Wong Hiu-lei

Ms Kathy Wong Kin-ho

Dr Wong Kwai-yau

Ex-officio Members

Secretary for Education

Secretary for Food and Health

Secretary for Home Affairs

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

Director of Social Welfare

Director of Health

Director of Home Affairs

Chairperson of Family Council

Chairperson of Women's Commission

Biographical notes on the non-official members are in the Annex.

“Quarterly Report on General Household Survey” for January to March 2018 published

The "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" for January to March 2018 is now available for download.

The report contains statistics on labour force, employment, unemployment and underemployment for the first quarter of 2018. It also contains detailed analyses of the characteristics of different categories of members of the labour force, including their age, sex, educational attainment, employment status, occupation, industry, hours worked per week and monthly employment earnings. Information on reasons for leaving last job and duration of unemployment for the unemployed is also presented.

Users can download the report free of charge from the website of the Census and Statistics Department (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001).

The summary of broad survey findings published in the report is shown in Table 1 attached. Enquiries about the contents of the report can be directed to the Household Statistics Analysis Section, Census and Statistics Department (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).