

DH conducts enforcement operation "Pipepurge" against waterpipe smoking in no smoking areas (with photos)

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) of the Department of Health (DH) conducted an enforcement operation, codenamed "Pipepurge", in Mong Kok last night (February 13) against illegal waterpipe smoking activities in no smoking areas and a total of three fixed penalty notices (FPNs) were issued.

During the operation, officers from TACO (including plainclothes officers) carried out inspections and enforcement action at one bar in Mong Kok, and issued a total of three FPNs to persons illegally smoking waterpipes. TACO's investigation is ongoing, and prosecution may also be taken against operators of the bar who are suspected of aiding and abetting smoking offences. TACO will also refer the cases to the Liquor Licensing Board for appropriate follow-up action.

Under the Ordinance, conducting a smoking act in a statutory no smoking area (such as indoor areas of bars or restaurants) is prohibited. Any person doing a smoking act in statutory no smoking areas is liable to a fixed penalty of \$1,500. Moreover, where smoking products (including waterpipes) are sold, in bars or otherwise, the restrictions on the promotion and sale of smoking products stipulated in the Ordinance apply. Offenders are liable on a summary conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000. Venue managers of statutory no smoking areas are empowered by the Ordinance to request a smoking offender cease the act; if the offender is not co-operative, the manager may contact the Police for assistance.

In addition, under the Criminal Procedure Ordinance, any person who aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission by another person of any offence shall be guilty of the same offence.

"The DH will continue to closely monitor and take stringent enforcement action against illegal waterpipe smoking. Last year (2024), TACO conducted 162 operations against illegal waterpipe smoking activities in no smoking areas. A total of 162 FPNs were issued against smoking offenders, while 89 summonses were issued to staff members and operators of the bars/restaurants for other related offences," the Head of TACO, Dr Fung Ying, said.

Dr Fung reminded the public that a waterpipe is also a smoking product, and its combustion of fuel (e.g. charcoal) releases carbon monoxide. Exposure to a low concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to a range of symptoms such as dizziness, headache, tiredness and nausea; whereas exposure to a high concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to impaired vision, disturbed co-ordination, unconsciousness, brain damage or even death. People should seek medical attention immediately if they suspect they are developing symptoms of

carbon monoxide poisoning.

Due to deeper inhalation and longer smoking sessions, waterpipe users usually inhale more toxins than they would when smoking cigarettes. A typical one-hour waterpipe smoking session exposes the user to 100 to 200 times the volume of smoke inhaled from a single conventional cigarette. Moreover, sharing a waterpipe apparatus increases the risk of transmitting infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis.

Dr Fung cautioned against waterpipe smoking and the use of other smoking products. Smokers should quit smoking as early as possible for their own health and that of others. For more information on the hazards of waterpipe smoking, please visit www.livetobaccofree.hk/pdfs/waterpipe_leaflet_new.pdf.



[Appointments to Committee on Financial Assistance for Family Members of those who Sacrifice their Lives to Save Others](#)

The Government today (February 14) announced the reappointment of one incumbent member, as well as the appointments of three new members, namely Miss Dana Lau Sing-she, Ms Janus Lau Yuen-yee and Mr Solomon Yung Sze-hon, to the Committee on Financial Assistance for Family Members of those who Sacrifice their Lives to Save Others for a term of two years with effect from February 15, 2025.

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, welcomed the appointments and said he looks forward to working closely with members of the Committee in the new term. Mr Sun also thanked the outgoing members, Miss Edna Chow On-lai, Mr Law King-shing and Ms Wong May-kwan, for their contributions to the Committee.

The Committee considers and approves applications under the Financial Assistance Scheme for Family Members of those who Sacrifice their Lives to Save Others. The Scheme represents the Government's recognition of the brave acts and sacrifice undertaken by these individuals and seeks to alleviate the financial hardship that their family members may face as a consequence of their death.

The list of non-official members of the Committee in the new term is as follows:

Miss Dana Lau Sing-she
Ms Janus Lau Yuen-yee
Ms Lee Sau-king
Mr Solomon Yung Sze-hon

Bun Scrambling Competition in Cheung Chau to open for applications on February 17

The e-ballot application period for joining the Bun Scrambling Competition, which is the finale of the 2025 Bun Carnival at Cheung Chau, will start next Monday (February 17). Physically fit climbers aged 18 or above who are interested in the competition should submit their applications on or before February 28.

The final selection exercise, to be held on April 13, will consist of two rounds. Twenty-four contestants recording the shortest time in the preliminary round (including no fewer than six female participants) will be eligible to enter the semi-final on the same day to compete for 12 finalist places (including no fewer than three female participants). The 12 finalists will enter the Bun Scrambling Final to be held from 11.30pm on May 5 to 12.45am on May 6. Trophies will be awarded to the champion as well as the first and second runners-up in the men's division, and to the champion in the women's division. The contestant who bags the highest number of buns within the time limit will be the prize winner of "Full Pockets of Lucky Buns".

To acknowledge the outstanding achievements of the winners and enhance the appeal of the event, any male or female athlete who has been the champion

for three times in the Bun Scrambling Competition since 2016 will be the "King of Kings" or the "Queen of Queens" of the competition and be awarded a trophy.

Persons interested in participating in the competition should complete SmartPLAY user registration and identity authentication, and submit their electronic ballot applications from February 17 to 28 via the SmartPLAY website (www.smartplay.lcsd.gov.hk/home), the mobile app (My SmartPLAY) or Smart Self-service Stations. User registration at SmartPLAY is free of charge. To register as SmartPLAY users, please refer to the link (www.smartplay.lcsd.gov.hk/website/en/user-registration/how-to-register.html).

The maximum number of entrants for the Bun Scrambling Competition is 200. All places will be allocated by ballot via SmartPLAY. Applicants who live, work or study at Cheung Chau will be accorded priority in the ballot. All selected applicants are required to complete the safety training sessions on bun tower climbing and prevention of falls on April 6 to be eligible for the competition. Details are provided in the prospectus available on the SmartPLAY website, the mobile app (My SmartPLAY) and the 2025 Bun Carnival dedicated website (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/bun/index.html).

The 2025 Bun Carnival is jointly organised by the Hong Kong Cheung Chau Bun Festival Committee and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). Besides the Bun Scrambling Competition, the Bun Tower Climbing Team Relay will be held on the morning of April 27. Local tertiary institutions, Government Departments, public utilities and commercial and industrial organisations will be invited to take part in the relay. Members of the public are welcome to watch the game on-site and cheer for the contestants. At the Climbing Carnival to be held in the afternoon on the same day, there will be a bun tower climbing fun day, game stalls, handicrafts making and variety shows. A Wishing Bun Tower will also be set up, and the winning entries of the Student Drawing Competitions will be displayed. Members of the public are welcome to attend the carnival.

For enquiries, please contact the Islands District Leisure Services Office of the LCSD at 2852 3220, or visit the 2025 Bun Carnival dedicated website.

Reclamation works at Tseung Kwan O Area 137 and off Area 132 proposed

The Government proposes to carry out reclamation works within an area of about 46 hectares of foreshore and seabed to the southwest of Tseung Kwan O Area 137 (TKO 137) and within an area of about 55 hectares of foreshore and

seabed to the southeast off Tseung Kwan O Area 132 (TKO 132). The extent of the area of foreshore and seabed affected is described in a [notice](#) gazetted today (February 14).

The proposed works at TKO 137 include construction of about 1.7 kilometres of seawall, filling of the seabed to form about 20 hectares of land for housing and community facility development, and reprovisioning of temporary facilities. The proposed works off TKO 132 include construction of about 1.3km of seawall, and filling of the seabed to form about 20 hectares of land for accommodating public facilities. The proposed works are tentatively scheduled to commence by the end of 2025.

The notice and its related plan are posted near the site. The plan is also available for inspection at:

- * Survey and Mapping Office of the Lands Department (6/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong) (where copies can be purchased on order);
- * Sai Kung Home Affairs Enquiry Centre of the Sai Kung District Office (G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex, 38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O, New Territories); and
- * Lands Department's website (www.landso.gov.hk) under Government Notices.

Enquiries regarding the proposed works can be addressed to the East Development Office, Civil Engineering and Development Department as stated in the notice.

Any person who considers that he or she has an interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and seabed involved may submit a written objection to the Director of Lands, 20/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong, within two months from the gazette date, i.e. on or before April 14. The objector shall describe in the notice of objection his or her interest, right or easement, and the manner in which he or she will be allegedly affected.

2026 Population Census

The Census and Statistics (2026 Population Census) Order (the Order) was published in the Gazette today (February 14) to enable the conduct of a population census from January 1 to December 31, 2026.

The Order was made by the Chief Executive in Council under section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance (Cap. 316) to specify the dates for and purpose of conducting the 2026 Population Census; the persons, premises and vessels in respect of which particulars are to be obtained; and the deadline for destroying the completed questionnaires. The Schedule to the Order also specifies the matters in respect of which respondents are required to give

particulars.

A Government spokesman said, "The purpose for conducting a population census is to obtain up-to-date benchmark information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population of Hong Kong. Such information is important to the Government for planning and policy formulation, and the private sector and academia for business and research purposes respectively. As a major step to modernise and reform Hong Kong's population censuses, several re-engineering initiatives will be implemented from the 2026 Population Census, such that about nine-tenths of the population will no longer be required to fill out any questionnaire as only the sampled one-tenth population will be subject to detailed enquiry by 'long form' questionnaire. In addition, government administrative data will be used more extensively to supplement survey data with a view to reducing the reporting burden of respondents. A Small-scale Test Survey for the 2026 Population Census will be conducted from April to July this year."

The spokesman added, "Sampled households are encouraged to participate in the Census by means of online questionnaires. Households may also choose to provide the requested information by telephone interview. Census officers of the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) will visit households who have not yet completed their questionnaires to collect the requested information."

The spokesman reminded members of the public that households selected to participate in the Census will receive a household notification letter issued by the C&SD. If households have not provided the C&SD with their telephone numbers, the C&SD will not initiate calls to the households. When visiting households, census officers will wear a vest uniform and carry a Government Identity Card/Enumerator Identity Card and a Census Officer Certificate of Identity issued by the C&SD for identification purposes.

"To protect the privacy of respondents, the C&SD will implement strict procedures to handle all data collected and will only release statistics that do not reveal the identity of the individuals involved," the spokesman said. All completed questionnaires, in both paper and electronic forms, will be destroyed on or before December 31, 2027.

The Order will be tabled at the Legislative Council for negative vetting next Wednesday (February 19).