

International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (July 31) the analytical data on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's foreign currency reserves and foreign currency liquidity as at the end of June 2020 (Annex). These data are published monthly in the Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of July 2020, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

July 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
July 14 (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
July 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
July 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Residential Mortgage Survey Results

for June 2020

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for June 2020.

The number of mortgage applications in June decreased month-on-month by 7.9 per cent to 13,829.

Mortgage loans approved in June increased by 16.3 per cent compared with May to HK\$47.6 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions increased by 28.6 per cent to HK\$8.4 billion and those financing secondary market transactions increased by 19 per cent to HK\$33.9 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing decreased by 10 per cent to HK\$5.3 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during June increased by 23.8 per cent compared with May to HK\$29.3 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR increased from 91 per cent in May to 92.2 per cent in June. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates decreased from 5.7 per cent in May to 4.7 per cent in June.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans increased month-on-month by 0.9 per cent to HK\$1,514.9 billion at end-June.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.04 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.

Latest arrangements for Labour Department public services

In light of the extension of the special work arrangements for government employees for one week until August 9, the Labour Department (LD) today (July 31) announced that the LD will continue to provide emergency services and essential public services during this period.

All counter services of the department will be suspended. Two Occupational Health Clinics and Occupational Medicine Units will be closed. Those who have made service appointments will be individually informed of the alternative arrangements.

The LD encourages members of the public to make use of the department's online services and to file enquiries and requests for service by email

at enquiry@labour.gov.hk.

Job seekers can use the Interactive Employment Service Website (www.jobs.gov.hk) for job search purposes. The LD's Telephone Employment Service Centre, all Job Centres and industry-based Recruitment Centres also provide enquiry and employment services by telephone (telephone numbers are shown at www.jobs.gov.hk/1/0/WebForm/information/en/our_service/info_jobcentres.aspx) during office hours from Monday to Friday (9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5.30pm).

Applicants for issue of licence or renewal of licence of employment agency may submit their applications to the office of the Employment Agencies Administration by post (Unit 906, 9/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon) or email (ea-ee@labour.gov.hk).

For information about employment rights and benefits, members of the public may browse the LD's website at www.labour.gov.hk/eng/faq/content.htm.

Due to the special work arrangements, the processing time for various enquiries and applications may take longer than usual.

The LD will review the situation in due course and make further announcements as appropriate.

Hong Kong Customs urges public to stop using one type of surgical mask suspected of exceeding bacterial limit (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 30) seized a total of 13 020 pieces of surgical masks in 434 boxes with a bacterial count suspected of exceeding the maximum permitted limit, in contravention of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO). Members of the public are urged to stop using this type of mask and traders should remove the product from their shelves.

Customs received the test results of the latest batch of 14 test-purchased surgical masks samples on July 29. According to the relevant hygienic standard for disposable sanitary products, the total bacterial count of the sample of one type of surgical mask exceeded the maximum permitted limit by 1.3 times, in contravention of the CGSO.

The surgical mask concerned was packed in boxes of 30 pieces each with individual packaging. The manufacturing location is China, as marked on the box. Customs officers test-purchased the mask from a pharmacy in Sai Wan in

early July.

After an investigation, Customs yesterday seized 304 boxes of surgical masks of the same type from the office of a supplier in Kwai Chung. An investigation revealed that the surgical masks involved in the case were imported from the Mainland by the supplier and were then supplied to three pharmacies located in Sai Wan, Mong Kok and Kowloon Bay. On the same day, 130 boxes of this type of surgical mask were further seized from the three pharmacies, with selling prices ranging from \$98 to \$128.

During the operation, four persons aged between 41 and 77, including a director of the supplier, a pharmacy director and two pharmacy proprietors, were arrested. They have been released on bail pending further investigation. Customs will further examine the surgical masks involved to establish the types of bacteria present.

Apart from the pharmacies connected with the case, officers also checked multiple retail spots in various districts. No such product was found for sale.

In view of the development of the COVID-19 epidemic, Customs launched a large-scale territory-wide special operation codenamed "Guardian" on January 27 this year to conduct spot checks, test purchases and inspections in various districts regarding surgical masks available in the market. Samples of masks were also sent to the laboratory for tests on bacterial counts. To date, Customs has already test-purchased over 540 types of surgical masks for tests on bacterial counts. Among these, 520 samples have been tested for bacterial counts.

Apart from the sample announced in this round, Customs has also announced another 10 types of surgical masks with bacterial counts suspected of exceeding the maximum permitted limit between March and June, of which the total bacterial counts exceeded the maximum permitted limit by 15 per cent to 11.5 times.

Customs again reminds members of the public to observe the following tips when purchasing and using surgical masks:

- Check if there is any dirt on the masks and stop using them if they have stains or odd smells;
- Pay attention to the proper way of using surgical masks;
- Change surgical masks at a suitable time;
- Store surgical masks in dry places; and
- Purchase surgical masks at reputable retail shops.

â€‹The "Guardian" operation has been running for over six months to date. More than 5 700 officers have been mobilised to conduct over 36 000 inspections at retail spots in various districts to ensure that common protective items sold in the market comply with the CGS0 and the Trade

Descriptions Ordinance.



Special work arrangements for DoJ from August 3 to 7

To align with the special work arrangements announced by the Government to stop COVID-19 from further spreading in the community, the Department of Justice announced today (July 31) that the following basic and essential services will be provided:

* Reception Counters

Prosecutions Division – 12/F, West Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central

August 3 to 7, 2020 (Monday to Friday)

9am to 1pm and 2pm to 6pm

Civil Division – 6/F, East Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central
August 3 to 7, 2020 (Monday to Friday)

9am to 1pm and 2pm to 6pm

* Shroff Office

Civil Division – 8/F, West Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central
August 4, 2020 (Tuesday) and August 6, 2020 (Thursday)

9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4.30pm

Members of the public and the legal profession can continue to serve or submit court documents and other correspondence in matters handled by the two

Divisions to the respective counters and make payments to the Shroff Office. While the documents will be processed as quickly as possible, the response time may be longer than usual.