

## **LCSD suspends enrolment arrangements of recreation and sports programmes**

To align with the Government's latest anti-epidemic measures, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (July 20) that the counter services at the 18 districts Leisure Services Offices, including the enrolment arrangements of recreation and sports programmes, will be suspended starting from today until further notice.

In view of the recent local worsening situation of COVID-19, the LCSD has also cancelled the recreation and sports programmes to be held in August so as to reduce social contacts and prevent the spread of the virus in the community. The LCSD will arrange refunds for the affected participants of paid activities. As regards the recreation and sports programmes to be held in September, members of the public can still enroll through Leisure Link e-Services or by post. The LCSD will continue to monitor the situation closely and review the arrangements in a timely manner.

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, July 20, 2020 is 106.8 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, July 18, 2020 was 106.8 (down 0.2 against last Friday's index).

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## **Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 20) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From July 12 to 18, one community-acquired LD case was reported, involving a female patient, aged 71 with underlying illnesses, who lives in

Siu Keung House, Siu Kwai Court, Tuen Mun.

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

As of July 18 this year, 54 LD cases had been reported. In 2019 and 2018, there were 105 cases each year.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunities 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 become 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 humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. 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 consumption;
- 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 filters 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 ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) 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 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 doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device 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 in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Wear gloves and a face mask;

2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;

3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;

4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and

5. 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.

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## Nineteen building plans approved in May

The Buildings Department approved 19 building plans in May, with five on Hong Kong Island, five in Kowloon and nine in the New Territories.

Of the approved plans, nine were for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, three were for commercial developments, three were for factory and industrial developments, and four were for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for works to start on 14 building projects which, when completed, will provide 353 428 square metres of gross floor area for domestic use involving 7 372 units, and 9 952 sq m of gross floor area for non-domestic use. The department has received notification of commencement of superstructure works for 11 building projects.

The department also issued 18 occupation permits, with seven on Hong Kong Island, three in Kowloon and eight in the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation, the gross floor area for domestic use was 200 754 sq m involving 3 754 units, and 112 708 sq m was for

non-domestic use.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in May totalled about \$12.1 billion.

In addition, 10 demolition consents involving 10 building structures were issued.

The department received 3 783 reports about unauthorised building works (UBWs) in May and issued 656 removal orders on UBWs.

The full version of the Monthly Digest for May can be viewed on the Buildings Department's homepage ([www.bd.gov.hk](http://www.bd.gov.hk)).

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## **CFS announces results of targeted surveillance on *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat food**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 20) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat food. All samples passed the test.

The CFS collected a total of 500 samples of ready-to-eat food from different retail outlets, including online retailers and food factories for testing of *Listeria monocytogenes* this year. The samples included various types of high-risk food, such as cheese, frozen confections, cold cuts, fruit, salad, sashimi, smoked salmon and other smoked seafood.

"*Listeria monocytogenes* can be killed under normal cooking temperatures. However, unlike other food-poisoning bacteria, it can grow slowly at refrigerated temperatures as low as 0 degrees Celsius. Therefore, refrigerated ready-to-eat food with a long shelf life (over five days) is a potential high-risk item for listeriosis," a spokesman for the CFS said.

Listeriosis is usually caused by eating food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*. Most healthy individuals do not develop symptoms or only have mild symptoms such as fever, muscle pain, headache, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea when infected. However, severe complications such as septicemia, meningitis or even death may occur in newborns, the elderly and those with weaker immune systems. Although infected pregnant women may just experience mild symptoms generally, the infection of *Listeria monocytogenes* may cause miscarriage, infant death, preterm birth, or severe infection in newborns.

The spokesman reminded the public to maintain good personal and food

hygiene to ensure food safety. To reduce the risk of listeriosis, those belonging to high-risk groups, i.e. pregnant women, infants, the elderly, chronic disease patients and those with weaker immune systems, should avoid eating high-risk food, including refrigerated ready-to-eat food with a long shelf life (over five days) (such as smoked salmon, smoked ham and cooked deli meats), cheese made with unpasteurised milk (including soft and semi-soft cheese), and pre-made or prepackaged salads. Moreover, the food trade, such as restaurants, can indicate dishes containing raw or undercooked ingredients on menus to help consumers make informed choices.

The CFS will continue to promote food safety education to the public and other stakeholders through various channels to strengthen public knowledge on food safety. The Centre will also enhance communication with the food trade to raise food safety standards.