

Hong Kong Customs makes first seizure of suspected illegally imported toothfish items (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 8) seized about 220 kilograms of suspected illegally imported toothfish items with an estimated market value of about \$120,000 at Hong Kong International Airport. This is the first seizure of suspected illegally imported toothfish items made by Customs since the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Ordinance (CAMLR Ordinance) and its subsidiary legislation came into effect on July 1 this year.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers yesterday inspected an air consignment, declared as carrying frozen fish, imported from the Netherlands into Hong Kong. Upon examination, Customs officers found in 32 paper boxes the batch of toothfish items suspected of being imported without a licence issued by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD).

The case was handed over to the AFCD for follow-up investigation.

Under the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (Toothfish Catch Documentation Scheme) Regulation, any import, export or re-export of live or dead toothfish items is prohibited except under and in accordance with relevant licences issued by the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation. The maximum penalty as stipulated in the CAMLR Ordinance is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk). For details of the CAMLR Ordinance and the requirements concerned, please visit www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/CCAMLR/ccamlr_Main.html.



Government tightens social distancing measures

The Government will gazette today (July 9) directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) to tighten social distancing measures.

The epidemic situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong has undergone drastic changes recently. New cases recorded during the period from July 2 to July 8, 2020 include 31 cases without travel history during the incubation period. Twenty-four new confirmed cases were recorded on July 8, including 19 local cases, five cases of which the source of infection is unknown.

According to the World Health Organization and health experts, COVID-19 would not be eradicated without effective treatment and vaccination. The Government thus is required to incorporate work in relation to disease prevention and control as well as infection management into the new normal of the daily operation of the society. To this end, the Government has all along adopted the "suppress and lift" strategy in order to quickly adjust epidemic control measures should there be inevitable sporadic cases or small-scale community outbreaks.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The detection of quite a number of local cases with unknown sources of infection detected over a short period of time raises an important alarm, reminding the community that members of the public must not let down their guard in terms of epidemic prevention and control. In view of the latest public health risk assessment, in particular the higher risks brought about by activities conducted without wearing masks as shown in recent cases, we are of the view that it is now necessary to tighten social distancing measures, including the limits on number of persons and capacity, as well as other infection control requirements on catering business and some scheduled premises."

The requirements and restrictions under the latest directions (details at Annex) will come into effect on July 11, 2020 for a period of 14 days till July 24, 2020 as follows:

Catering business

(1) On catering business, the number of customers at any catering premises at any one time must not exceed 60% of the normal seating capacity of the premises. No more than eight persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises, while for bars and pubs, no more than four persons may be seated together at one table therein. Other requirements and restrictions in relation to catering business premises will be maintained.

Scheduled premises

(2) On scheduled premises, the limit on number of persons at premises where activities are conducted without wearing masks are tightened –

(a) For party rooms and karaoke establishments, the number of persons allowed in each room at the same time is tightened from 16 to eight.

(b) For fitness centres, the number of persons (including the coach) allowed in each group training or class at the same time is tightened from 16 to eight. For a group training or class of more than eight persons, it must be conducted in a way to ensure that persons are arranged in groups of no more than eight persons and there is at least 1.5 metres between each group or there is some form of partition which could serve as effective buffer between each group. The coach must wear a mask all the time if he/she is not staying at a fixed location not less than 1.5 metres from other persons.

(c) For clubs or nightclubs, the number of persons who may be seated together at one table is tightened from eight to four. The number of customers allowed therein at any one time is tightened from 80% to 60% of the normal seating capacity or normal capacity of such premises.

(3) No eating or drinking inside cinemas and all places of public entertainment with live performance is allowed.

Other requirements and restrictions in relation to scheduled premises will be maintained.

All of the other directions issued earlier by the Secretary for Food and Health in accordance to Cap. 599F (i.e. the directions which took effect on July 3) will be suspended on July 11 procedurally.

"We will continue to closely monitor the development of the epidemic situation and review the various measures in place from time to time with a view to making suitable adjustments taking into account all relevant factors. We also strongly urge the public to stay vigilant, maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, and maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to prevent the virus from spreading in the community," said the spokesman.

Persons responsible for carrying on catering businesses and the managers of scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under Cap. 599F would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In addition, the direction made by the Secretary for Food and Health under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) which took effect on July 3 remains in effect.

CHP investigates 42 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (July 9), the CHP was investigating 42 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 366 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 365 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve 27 males and 15 females aged between three months and 95 years. Among them, eight had a travel history during the incubation period.

For the local cases announced today, the CHP will distribute deep throat saliva specimen bottles to residents of buildings where the patients live, as well as to those whom they might have had contact with during the infectious period. People are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use.

After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

[Government welcomes passage of Limited](#)

Partnership Fund Bill

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, welcomed the passage of the Limited Partnership Fund Bill by the Legislative Council today (July 9).

The new Ordinance establishes a limited partnership fund regime which enables funds to be registered in the form of limited partnerships in Hong Kong. The new Ordinance will come into operation on August 31, 2020.

Mr Hui said that as Hong Kong strives to develop into an international asset and wealth management centre, the new Ordinance made impressive strides on this front in attracting investment funds (including private equity and venture capital funds) to set up and operate in Hong Kong. This would further promote Hong Kong's private equity market and drive demand for local related professional services, and in turn strengthen Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre.

The limited partnership fund regime is an opt-in registration scheme administered by the Companies Registry. Limited partnership is a common constitution form for private funds such as private equity funds. In a limited partnership, the general partner (i.e. operating person) with unlimited liability in respect of the debts and liabilities of the fund and the limited partner(s), who are essentially investors, with limited liability will have freedom of contract in respect of the operation of the partnership.

Hong Kong Customs seizes about 10 million suspected illicit cigarettes (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (July 9) seized about 10 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$27 million and a duty potential of about \$19 million at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers today selected for inspection a seaborne transshipment container, declared as carrying karaoke players, arriving from Singapore and heading for the Philippines via Hong Kong. Upon inspection, Customs officers found the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes inside 1,003 cartons in the container.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers arrested a 38-year-old man-in-charge of a logistics company suspected to be in connection with the case.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source to combat illicit cigarette activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

