

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (June 29) 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 June 21 to 27, four community-acquired LD cases were reported:

1. A male patient, aged 73 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Chung Chun House, Chung Nga Court, Tai Po;
2. A male patient, aged 66 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Merlin Court, Kowloon Tong;
3. A male patient, aged 60 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Chung Tak House, Chung On Estate, Ma On Shan; and
4. A male patient, aged 78 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Pik Yuen House, Shek Pai Wan Estate, Aberdeen.

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

As of June 27 this year, 47 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 (μm) 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.

New District Officer for Central and Western assumes office (with photo)

Mr David Leung will assume the post of District Officer (Central and Western) tomorrow (June 30), succeeding Mrs Susanne Wong.

Mr Leung joined the Administrative Service in 1998. He has served in various bureaux and departments including the Home Affairs Department; the former Environment and Food Bureau; the former Health, Welfare and Food Bureau; the University Grants Committee Secretariat; the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer; and the Education Bureau.

He was Deputy Secretary-General of the University Grants Committee Secretariat before taking up the new post.



Results for “Relaunch Hong Kong” tender exercise announced

The Information Services Department (ISD) announced today (June 29) that the public relations contract for the "Relaunch Hong Kong" campaign has been awarded to Consulum FZ LLC (Consulum) through an open tender.

With the awarding of the contract, Consulum will start to develop a communications strategy as well as a marketing and advertising plan to highlight Hong Kong's recovery and help rebuild confidence in Hong Kong as a place to invest, do business, work and live.

The company will carry out local and international baseline research to shape an issues and crisis management programme that will address the information needs and current perceptions of Hong Kong's key global stakeholders.

"We believe this initiative can help Hong Kong reconnect with global audiences as we gradually reopen for business and visitors after the worldwide fight against COVID-19 subsides," Deputy Director of Information Services Mr Brett Free said.

"This programme will help us to inform global audiences about Hong Kong's economic recovery and responses to issues of international interest, including the facts surrounding Hong Kong's efforts to address the COVID-19 crisis, and that Hong Kong remains always welcoming and open for business."

Consulum is a global strategy and communications consultancy that specialises in supporting countries and governments.

At the close of the application period on May 15, the ISD had received a total of seven bids for this tender exercise. After thorough assessment, Consulum was selected for a one-year contract at a tender sum of US\$6,289,215.

Missing woman in Sham Shui Po located

A woman who went missing in Sham Shui Po has been located.

Liu Ping-mui, aged 87, went missing after she was last seen in her residence at Lai Kok Estate on June 24. Her family made a report to Police on June 25.

The woman was located outside a hospital on Wing Hong Street, Cheung Sha Wan, on June 27. She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

Two illegal workers jailed

Two Vietnamese illegal workers were jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts on June 26.

During the operation "Twilight" conducted on May 13, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a restaurant in Kowloon Bay. A male Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 27, was arrested while working as a kitchen worker. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was also arrested and an investigation is ongoing.

In addition, during operation "Breakthrough" conducted on May 24, ImmD investigators raided a restaurant in Mongkok. A male Vietnamese illegal worker, aged 29, was arrested while working as a dish-washing worker. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was also arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The two illegal workers were charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on June 26 with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charge and were each sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. Meanwhile, they were each also charged with one count of being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. They were sentenced to 12 months and 15 months' imprisonment respectively. All sentences are to run concurrently for a total of 15 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. Under the prevailing laws, it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure,

conduct an initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers who are arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.