

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (May 14) seized about 4.5 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$5 million at Hong Kong International Airport.

Customs officers examined an air express parcel from Colombia being transshipped to the Mainland of China through Hong Kong yesterday. The batch of suspected cocaine, black in colour instead of the conventional white colour, was found concealed inside a deflated rubber boat. It is believed that that culprits intended to use this approach to evade detection by law enforcers.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs will continue to make use of intelligence analysis, risk assessment and international co-operation to combat drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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



CHP investigates additional confirmed

case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 15), the CHP was investigating an additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 053 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 052 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case announced today involves a 43-year-old male who had a travel history during the incubation period. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed case are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of infection by contact with 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 if 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."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 114 110 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic

Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

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 door knobs, 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
- If 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.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (May 15), in the past 24 hours 10 COVID-19 confirmed patients (case numbers: 284, 427, 443, 466, 471, 580, 663, 831, 1039 and 1048) were discharged from hospitals. So far, a total of 1 019 confirmed and suspected patients have been discharged.

At present, there are 673 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 251 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 29 confirmed patients

are currently hospitalised in nine hospitals, among which one patient is in critical condition (case number: 595), three patients are in serious condition (case numbers: 338, 461 and 713), and the remaining 25 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (May 15) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay, see Note 2).

Thirty beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and nine as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Lower Cheung Sha Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Pui O Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Shek O Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Discovery Bay	South Bay Beach
Golden Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Ting Kau Beach
Kadoorie Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Trio Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Castle Peak Beach
Approach Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Butterfly Beach	Lido Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach

Casam Beach

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note 1: To tie in with the response level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance having been raised to the Emergency Response Level and to encourage people to avoid gathering, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has announced that all beaches will continue to be temporarily closed until further notice.

Note 2: Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

Red tide sighted

A red tide has been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (May 15).

The red tide was spotted by staff of the Environmental Protection Department on May 12 at Silver Mine Bay Beach, Lantau Island. The red tide has dissipated and no associated fish deaths have been reported so far.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The red tide was formed by *Heterosigma akashiwo*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters. According to overseas literature, *Heterosigma akashiwo* might produce neurotoxins and kill fish by damaging their gills."

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) urged mariculturists at the Ma Wan, Cheung Sha Wan, Lo Tik Wan and Sok Kwu Wan fish culture zones to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.