

Hong Kong Customs and Marine Police join forces and seize suspected smuggled goods worth \$23 million (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs and the Marine Police mounted a joint operation and detected a suspected speedboat-related smuggling case in Sha Tau Kok on May 12. A batch of suspected smuggled goods was seized including cosmetics, daily necessities, food and electronic products with an estimated market value of about \$23 million. Customs has to date detected 25 sea smuggling cases this year with a total seizure amount of about \$150 million, which is similar to the total annual seizure amounts of 2018 and 2019.

Customs officers and Marine Police officers conducted an anti-smuggling operation at Sha Tau Kok on that day and spotted several suspicious men on the shore moving carton boxes from a private car to a speedboat. Officers then took action and the men immediately jumped into the speedboat and fled. A batch of suspected smuggled goods was seized on board the private car and another speedboat berthed at the seashore.

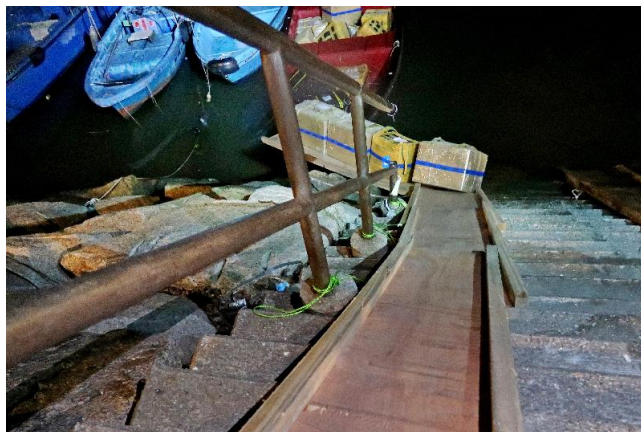
Customs officers later intercepted eight vehicles, comprising five private cars and three lorries, suspected to be related to the case in the vicinity. A batch of suspected smuggled goods was further seized on board the vehicles.

In the operation, Customs arrested two men aged 47 and 49. Six private vehicles, three lorries and one speedboat were detained for further investigation.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested men have been released on bail pending further investigation.

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 smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Two persons responsible for carrying on catering business convicted for contravening Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance

Two persons responsible for carrying on catering business were convicted of contravening sections 7(1) and 7(2) of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and the directions in relation to catering business by the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (May 14) for failing to comply with the regulations of keeping a distance of at least 1.5 metres or provision of a partition as an effective buffer between tables at the premises. They were each fined \$3,000.

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said that during the FEHD's inspections in Sham Shui Po District on April 7, FEHD officers found that two food premises failed to comply with the above-mentioned Regulation and directions. Prosecution was therefore instituted

against the persons-in-charge of the premises.

The spokesman reminded persons responsible for carrying on catering business that it is a criminal offence to contravene the above Regulation. Offenders are liable, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said that the FEHD will continue to take enforcement action to ensure that catering business operators comply with the Regulation and directions, and also appealed for their continuous support for the anti-epidemic work.

[Strategic directions set for driving genomic medicine in Hong Kong \(with photos/videos\)](#)

The Government today (May 14) announced the Strategic Development of Genomic Medicine in Hong Kong (the Strategy), a blueprint to drive the local development of genomic medicine in order to harness its huge potential in precise diagnoses, personalised treatment and surveillance of diseases.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "There has been a rapid development in genomic technology in recent years. The Government is determined to promote genomic medicine so that patients in need could benefit from more precise diagnoses and more personalised treatment, and the health of our population will be improved in the long run.

"The Government welcomes the Report of the Steering Committee on Genomic Medicine, which is chaired by Professor Raymond Liang, and is pleased to accept the recommendations in full. I would also like to thank members of the Steering Committee and its Working Groups for their insightful and valuable advice."

Among the specific recommendations put forth by the Steering Committee, the \$1.2 billion-budget Hong Kong Genome Project (HKGP) has been accorded the top priority. It is a large-scale genome sequencing project, with the pilot phase focusing on patients and their family members with undiagnosed disorders and hereditary cancers. Up to 40 000 to 50 000 genomes would be sequenced. The Hong Kong Genome Institute will take forward the implementation of the HKGP. Patients with informed consent will be recruited from the three partnering centres at Hong Kong Children's Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital and Prince of Wales Hospital. Sequencing analysis results will be fed back to patients once available to aid diagnoses or clinical

management.

Professor Chan added, "The HKGP will be a catalyst to establish a talent pool, the relevant standards and protocols, as well as a genome database of the local population which will greatly facilitate the clinical application of genomic medicine and scientific research."

Other recommendations put forward in the Report include:

- enhancing clinical services in genetics and genomics;
- nurturing talents in genomic medicine;
- enhancing public engagement in genomic medicine;
- enhancing the laboratory network with a effective referral mechanism and centralisation of advanced genetic and genomic tests;
- facilitating the establishment of a biobank network for genomic research;
- enhancing the regulation on the use of genetic data for insurance and employment purposes; and
- promoting the proper use of genetic and genomic tests.

Pursuant to the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address to harness the potential of new technology for better public health policies and clinical outcomes, the Steering Committee on Genomic Medicine was established in December 2017 to map out strategies for developing genomic medicine in Hong Kong. The Steering Committee submitted its report to the Government in December 2019. The Food and Health Bureau will lead and co-ordinate the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Strategy with various stakeholders including the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority, universities, medical and other relevant professional bodies and private sectors.

"Strategic Development of Genomic Medicine in Hong Kong" is now available at the Food and Health Bureau's website (www.fhb.gov.hk/en/press_and_publications/otherinfo/200300_genomic/index.html).





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 14), the CHP was investigating an additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 052 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 051 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The CHP will further extend its Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme, which provides a free testing service for COVID-19, to cover staff members currently working at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) starting tomorrow (May 15) for early detection of possible cases of COVID-19 infections and reducing the risk of community outbreaks. The CHP will set up a service point at a designated location at HKIA, which runs from 8am to 4pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays), to provide specimen containers to relevant airport workers. They should collect their deep throat saliva samples by themselves in accordance with the instructions, and return the specimen containers to the designated location at HKIA. The current daily testing quota is 500 persons.

The newly reported case announced today involves a 62-year-old male. 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 113 081 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 14), in the past 24 hours one COVID-19 confirmed patient (case number: 699) has been discharged from hospital. So far, a total of 1 009 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 39 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 11 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 35 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.