

CFS continues to follow up on ice cream samples detected with coliform bacteria and total bacterial counts exceeding legal limits

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 12) said that subsequent to an earlier announcement that a sample of milk-flavoured ice cream collected from a light refreshment restaurant in Kowloon Bay was found to contain coliform bacteria and total bacterial counts exceeding the legal limits, a follow-up investigation showed that another sample of milk-flavoured ice cream and a sample of milk tea-flavoured ice cream collected from the light refreshment restaurant concerned were found to contain coliform bacteria and total bacterial counts exceeding the legal limits. The products concerned were produced and sold at the same branch of the restaurant. The follow-up investigation is ongoing.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected food samples from the light refreshment restaurant concerned for testing when following up on the related incident on December 9. Results of the above-mentioned two ice cream samples produced at the branch of the restaurant concerned showed that the milk-flavoured ice cream sample contained 1 300 coliform bacteria per gram and 57 000 bacteria per gram, while the milk tea-flavoured ice cream sample contained 240 coliform bacteria per gram and 70 000 bacteria per gram, exceeding the legal limits. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence.

"The CFS has conducted follow-up investigation of the restaurant concerned again. According to the CFS's advice, the restaurant concerned has stopped selling all ice cream products since December 9 and carried out thorough cleaning and disinfection. The CFS has also provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the restaurant, and inspected and monitored the restaurant to ensure that it has adopted relevant improvement measures," the spokesman said.

Under the Frozen Confections Regulation (Cap. 132AC), frozen confection for sale should not contain more than 100 coliform bacteria per gram or more than 50,000 bacteria per gram. The maximum penalty for offenders is a fine of \$10,000 and three months' imprisonment upon conviction. The fact that the coliform count and the total bacterial count exceeded the legal limits indicated that the hygienic conditions were unsatisfactory, but did not mean that consumption would lead to food poisoning.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.