

Hawker convicted of illegal hawking and selling restricted food without permission

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (February 28) urged the public not to patronise unlicensed hawkers. The department said that a woman was arrested during a blitz enforcement operation against unlicensed hawkers and shop front extensions conducted earlier in Tuen Mun. She was caught selling food from unknown sources and selling restricted food without permission. The court recently convicted her of illegal hawking, obstructing public places and selling restricted food without permission, fining her \$5,000. The FEHD reaffirmed its commitment to relentlessly curbing unlicensed hawking activities, particularly when it involves food sales.

The FEHD spokesman said, "The department has been conducting blitz operations across multiple districts to combat illegal hawkers selling food from unknown sources or expired food. Seized items include bread, cakes, meat, Lunar New Year specialties, and expired food, such as instant noodles and other dried food. Offending hawkers have been charged in accordance with relevant legislation. So far, 22 relevant cases have been adjudicated, with all defendants convicted and fined by the court."

The spokesman stressed, "In general, FEHD staff would exercise leniency toward elderly or disabled hawkers. However, when food safety is at risk – such as with food of unknown origin or expired food – strict measures, including immediate arrests without prior warning, are enforced. These efforts will persist, and no one should defy the law."

The spokesman reminded members of the public, "Consuming food from unknown sources and expired food, particularly high-risk food such as meat, sashimi and sushi, may pose serious food safety hazards. We urge the public not to buy from illegal hawkers and to report suspicious food sales to the FEHD for prompt action."

According to the relevant ordinances, unlicensed hawking is subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and six months' imprisonment. If unlicensed hawking activities also cause obstruction of passageways, offenders may be fined \$25,000 or imprisoned for three months. In addition, any person who sells restricted food (including frozen meat, sashimi and sushi) without permission or sells expired food commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The FEHD called on members of the public to jointly safeguard food safety and environmental hygiene.