

# Ombudsman probes arrangements for production, distribution and stocktaking of surgical masks manufactured by Correctional Services Department

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (March 5) announced the launch of a direct investigation to examine the arrangements for production, distribution and stocktaking of surgical masks manufactured by the Correctional Services Department (CSD).

The CSD-manufactured surgical masks (commonly referred to as "CSI masks") are mainly supplied to the Government Logistics Department (GLD) for distribution to various departments in need. Amid the epidemic of COVID-19 infection in recent months, there is a spike in public demand for surgical masks. The media and members of the public have reported that CSI masks are available on the market, calling into question whether CSI masks have been misused or resold without authorisation.

In this connection, The Ombudsman decided to launch a direct investigation into the system and procedures regulating the production, distribution and stocktaking of CSI masks and the implementation of such a system and procedures by the CSD and GLD.

Ms Chiu said, "According to information released by the Government, CSI masks are mainly supplied to various departments for daily and contingency use. In 2019, the CSD supplied an average of 1.1 million surgical masks to GLD monthly, with a small quantity being sold to non-governmental organisations, including social welfare organisations and schools. Given the recent media reports that CSI masks are available on the market, the community is concerned about the possible misuse of CSI masks. Our office has also received complaints about the issue. I have, therefore, decided to probe into the issue by examining whether there are inadequacies in the arrangements of the CSD and GLD in the production, distribution and stocktaking of CSI masks. Where inadequacies are identified, I will make improvement recommendations to the departments concerned for closing any loopholes at source and avoiding any abuse of CSI masks."

The Ombudsman invites members of the public to send in information and/or views on the above topic to the Office of The Ombudsman by April 6, 2020:

Address: 30/F, China Merchants Tower, Shun Tak Centre  
168-200 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong

Fax: 2882 8149

Email: [complaints@ombudsman.hk](mailto:complaints@ombudsman.hk)