

Remarks by SLW on closure of Ocean Empire Food Shop

Below are the remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, on the closure of Ocean Empire Food Shop at a media session after attending a radio programme today morning (May 10):

Reporter: What is the Labour Department's current plan of action regarding the unpaid wages and severance payment owed to former employees of Ocean Empire Food Shop? What steps are the Labour Department taking to ensure these contributions are recovered and paid to the workers? The second question is, what steps are the Government taking to strengthen employment protection and prevent similar situations to recur in future? Thank you.

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: Right now our top priority is to help the 100 or so workers, local or imported, to get what they should get under the law, i.e. their unpaid salaries, unpaid leave as well as severance payment. We are helping them to apply for support under the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund against insolvency and wage default. It takes a bit of time, but they don't have to worry. Right now, under the Fund, be it unpaid salaries, unpaid leave as well as severance payment, there is a well-established mechanism for them to get back money that is owed to them. We are working closely with the employers because with their help, it could speed up the whole process. In Hong Kong we have very elaborated labour laws providing much needed and necessary protection for our workers, and such protection applies to both local and imported workers.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks.)