

Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong (Amendment) Regulation 2020 gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (March 24) the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong (Amendment) Regulation 2020 (the Amendment Regulation). The Amendment Regulation extends the compulsory 14-day quarantine arrangements to all persons arriving from or having stayed in Macao and Taiwan, in the past 14 days prior to arrival, in addition to those arriving from the Mainland.

Together with the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) effected on March 19, 2020, the Amendment Regulation implies that all inbound travellers would be subject to a compulsory quarantine, unless exempted. This is a further measure to avoid the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Hong Kong.

The Amendment Regulation will commence at 0.00am tomorrow (March 25) and will be effective for the same period as the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (i.e. till midnight of May 7, 2020).

Other arrangements relating to the compulsory quarantine requirement under Cap. 599C, including the exemption of certain categories of people fulfilling specific criteria by the Chief Secretary for Administration and the penalties, remain unchanged. Contravening the quarantine requirement is a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Amendment Regulation is made in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599). Section 8 of the Ordinance empowers the Chief Executive in Council to make public health emergency regulations for the purposes of preventing, combating or alleviating the effects of a public health emergency and protecting public health.

The Government published in the Gazette on February 7, 2020, the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) to subject all persons arriving from or having stayed in the Mainland for any period during the 14 days preceding their arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of nationality and travel documents used, to a compulsory quarantine for 14 days.

In view of the proliferation of the disease and the continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, the Centre for Health Protection strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

The Department of Health (DH) will closely monitor the situation. Any

updates will be issued through the media, the Government's "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html) and the DH's webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv). Any enquiries on health information on COVID-19 may be addressed to the DH's hotline at (852) 2125 1122 (operating daily from 8am to midnight).

Missing man in Kwun Tong located

A man who went missing in Kwun Tong has been located.

Wong Ching-tong, aged 58, went missing after he was last seen on Lei Yue Mun Road on March 21 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on March 22 morning.

Police located the man on Ka Lok Street this morning (March 24).

Import of poultry meat and products from District of Aurich, State of Niedersachsen in Germany suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (March 24) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in the District of Aurich of the State of Niedersachsen in Germany, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products, including poultry eggs, from the district with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong imported about 4 780 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and 2.9 million poultry eggs from Germany last year, according to the Census and Statistics Department.

"The CFS has contacted the German authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for the fourth quarter of 2019 and the whole year of 2019

Business receipts in value terms of most of major service industries showed decreases of different magnitudes in the fourth quarter of 2019 when compared with the fourth quarter of 2018, according to the provisional figures of business receipts indices released today (March 24) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD).

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2019 with the fourth quarter of 2018, double-digit decreases were recorded in business receipts of the accommodation services (-41.1%), retail (-22.4%), food services (-14.4%), warehousing and storage (-13.6%) and wholesale (-10.9%) industries.

On the other hand, the financing (except banking) industry recorded an increase of 9.9% in business receipts during the same period, followed by the real estate (+4.8%) industry.

Analysed by service domain, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 49.9% year-on-year during the same period, while those of the computer and information technology services domain also decreased by 10.0% year-on-year.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, business receipts in value terms of almost all service industries recorded decreases of different magnitudes in the fourth quarter of 2019 when compared with the third quarter of 2019. In particular, business receipts of the accommodation services industry decreased by 26.0%. On the other hand, the financing (except banking) industry registered an increase of 7.0% in business receipts during the same period.

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2019 with the third quarter of 2019 and on a seasonally adjusted basis, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 28.3%, whereas those of the computer and information technology services domain increased by 2.9%.

For 2019 as a whole, around half of service industries recorded year-on-year decreases in business receipts. Double-digit decreases were recorded in the accommodation services (-14.3%) and retail (-11.1%) industries. On the other hand, business receipts of the real estate industry increased by 11.1% as compared with 2018.

Analysed by service domain, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 19.0%, while those of the computer and information technology services domain also decreased by 7.3% during the same period.

Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that business receipts of most major service industries declined in the fourth quarter of 2019 over a year earlier. Hard hit by the local social incidents involving violence, industries related to consumption and tourism saw sharp falls in business receipts. The plunge in business receipts of tourism, convention and exhibition services domain was the largest since the SARS episode. Business receipts of the import/export trade and wholesale industries continued to record visible declines amid shrinking trade flows. Taking 2019 as a whole, visible declines in business receipts were recorded in the consumption- and tourism-related industries as well as trade-related industries.

The spokesman further pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought tourism almost to a standstill, caused severe disruptions to a wide range of economic activities and dampened economic sentiment lately. The service industries will be subject to even greater pressure in the near term, and the exact impact will hinge on the duration and severity of the pandemic. The Government will continue to monitor the developments closely.

Further information

Table 1 presents the business receipts indices and their corresponding year-on-year rates of change in respect of selected service industries and service domains for the recent five quarters and the whole year of 2019, while Table 2 shows the corresponding quarter-to-quarter rates of change in the business receipts indices for the recent five quarters based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The revised figures of business receipts indices for the fourth quarter and the whole year of 2019 will be released at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?subjectID=7&tableID=093&ID=0&productType=8) and relevant publications of the C&SD starting from April 20, 2020.

Data for compiling the business receipts indices are mainly based on the Quarterly Survey of Service Industries conducted by the C&SD, supplemented by relevant data provided by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

A service domain differs from a service industry in that it comprises those economic activities which straddle different industries but are somehow related to a common theme. It may include all activities carried out by all establishments in a service industry that is closely related to the domain. For a service industry that is less closely related, however, only a portion of the establishments in the industry or even only part of the economic activities of the establishments is related to the domain. Taking the

tourism, convention and exhibition services domain as an example, it includes all services of hotels and travel agents, and some (those involving visitors as customers) but not all of the services of restaurants, retailers and transport operators.

The classification of service industries follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the report "Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries, Fourth Quarter 2019". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?productCode=B1080006).

Members of the public who have enquiries about the business receipts indices may contact the Business Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7267 or email: business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk).

Provisional statistics on index of industrial production and producer price index for the industrial sector for the fourth quarter of 2019 and the whole year of 2019

According to the provisional results of a survey released today (March 24) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the index of industrial production for manufacturing industries as a whole decreased by 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with the same quarter of 2018, as against a year-on-year increase of 0.5% in the third quarter of 2019. The corresponding producer price index increased by 1.1% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with the same quarter of 2018, following a year-on-year increase of 1.3% in the third quarter of 2019.

The index of industrial production for sewerage, waste management and remediation activities decreased by 1.0% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with the same quarter of 2018, following a year-on-year decrease of 3.4% in the third quarter of 2019. The corresponding producer price index also decreased by 4.3% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with the same quarter of 2018, following a year-on-year decrease of 4.6% in the third quarter of 2019.

Indices of industrial production reflect changes in the volume of local

industrial output after discounting the effect of price changes. The price changes are measured by the producer price indices compiled from data on producer prices of selected industrial goods/services collected in the same survey.

Comparing the industrial production in respect of major manufacturing industries in the fourth quarter of 2019 with the same quarter of 2018, decreases in output volume were recorded in the metal, computer, electronic and optical products, machinery and equipment industry (-3.2%); and the food, beverages and tobacco industry (-2.1%). On the other hand, increases in output volume were mainly recorded in the paper products, printing and reproduction of recorded media industry (+1.0%); and the textiles and wearing apparel industry (+0.6%).

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the index of industrial production for manufacturing industries as a whole decreased by 0.8% in the fourth quarter of 2019 compared with the third quarter of 2019.

For 2019 as a whole, the index of industrial production for manufacturing industries increased by 0.4% while that for sewerage, waste management and remediation activities decreased by 0.7% compared with 2018.

Producer price indices reflect changes in the prices of local output. They measure changes in the actual prices (net of any discounts or rebates allowed to buyers, plus any surcharges) received by producers for their output. Transportation and other incidental charges are not included.

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2019 with the same quarter of 2018, increases in producer prices were recorded mainly in the metal, computer, electronic and optical products, machinery and equipment industry (+1.7%); the food, beverages and tobacco industry (+0.8%); and the paper products, printing and reproduction of recorded media industry (+0.4%).

For 2019 as a whole, the producer price indices for manufacturing industries increased by 1.0% while that for sewerage, waste management and remediation activities decreased by 2.7% compared with 2018.

Table 1 shows the year-on-year percentage changes in the indices of industrial production by selected industry grouping. Table 2 shows the year-on-year percentage changes in the producer price indices for the industrial sector by selected industry grouping.

The revised figures on indices of industrial production and producer price indices for the industrial sector for the fourth quarter of 2019 and the whole year of 2019 will be released at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/bbs.jsp) and relevant publications of the Department starting from April 24, 2020.

Users can download the reports "Quarterly Index of Industrial Production, 4th Quarter 2019" (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp310.jsp?productCode=B1070002) and

"Quarterly Producer Price Index for Industrial Sector, 4th Quarter 2019"
(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp280.jsp?productCode=B1070003) free of
charge at the website of the C&SD.

Readers who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the
Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7247; Fax:
2123 1048; email: ind-production@censtatd.gov.hk).