

Special work arrangements for Department of Justice between February 17 and 21

To align with the special work arrangements announced by the Government to reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Department of Justice announced today (February 14) that the department will continue to provide the following basic and essential services next week:

* Reception Counters

Prosecutions Division – 12/F, West Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central

February 17 to 21, 2020 (Monday to Friday)
9am to 1pm and 2pm to 6pm

Civil Division – 6/F, East Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central
February 17 to 21, 2020 (Monday to Friday)
9am to 1pm and 2pm to 6pm

* Shroff Office

Civil Division – 8/F, West Wing, Justice Place, 18 Lower Albert Road, Central
February 18, 2020 (Tuesday)
9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4.30 pm

Members of the public and the legal profession can continue to serve or submit court documents and other correspondence in matters handled by the two Divisions to the respective counters and make payments to the Shroff Office. While the documents will be processed as quickly as possible, the response time may be longer than usual.

Special work arrangements for Housing Authority to be extended

The following press release is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

In response to the Government's announcement that special work arrangements for government departments will be extended to reduce social

contacts and the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) announced today (February 14) that the following arrangements will be implemented until February 23 tentatively to provide basic and limited services to members of the public:

- All Estate Management Offices (EMOs) of public housing estates will be open from 10am to 1 pm on February 17 (Monday), February 19 (Wednesday) and February 21 (Friday) to provide limited general management services for public housing estates and handle cases with prior appointments. For enquiries outside the opening hours, residents may call the contact telephone numbers provided by the respective EMOs, and staff will render assistance as much as practicable. The EMOs' shroff offices will be closed temporarily from February 17 to 21. Residents can pay rent at more than 1,000 locations, such as convenience stores and supermarkets. They may also make payments via the Payment by Phone Service (PPS). For details, please browse the following website: www.housingauthority.gov.hk/tc/public-housing/rent-related-matters/rent-payment-methods/index.html;
- The Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) Sales Unit and the White Form Secondary Market Scheme (WSM) Unit in the Lok Fu Customer Service Centre and the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme Sales Unit in Kwun Tong will be temporarily closed until further notice. The HOS Secondary Market Scheme (SMS) Unit in Lung Cheung Office Block, Wong Tai Sin, will provide limited services from 10am to 1pm on February 17 (Monday) and February 18 (Tuesday) in relation to applications for the Letter of Nomination under the SMS and the WSM. The Home Assistance Loan Unit in Lung Cheung Office Block, Wong Tai Sin, will provide limited services from 10am to 1pm on February 20(Thursday) in relation to matters under the Home Assistance Loan Scheme and the Home Purchase Loan Scheme;
- All public rental housing application offices including the Lok Fu Customer Service Centre Office and the Sham Shui Po Housing Information Centre will be closed until further notice. All detailed vetting interviews, as well as flat selection under the Territory-wide Overcrowding Relief Exercise and the Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme will also be suspended until further notice;
- The Clearance Housing Office and the Redevelopment Sub-section offices (Pak Tin and Mei Tung) as well as the Public Housing Resources Management Sub-section will also be closed until further notice;
- Specific closing times for tenders received through the Tender Boxes on

the Ground Floor of the HA Headquarters Building at 33 Fat Kwong Street, Ho Man Tin, and all other HA offices on or before January 31 and February 7, 2020, have been extended to the same designated time on February 14 (Friday) while tenders which should be received on or after February 14 will not be affected; and

- During the period, the Shroff Office on the Ground Floor of HA Headquarters will provide limited services. All payment collection services (including premium payments by Subsidised Sale Flats Scheme owners to enable them to complete transactions of their flats) with the exception of rental payment collections will remain in operation.

In addition, due to the current work arrangements, the HA may not be able to reply to public enquiries, requests or complaints in a timely manner.

For enquiries, please call the HA hotline on [2712 2712](tel:27122712).

Hong Kong Customs' "Operation Guardian" combats unfair trade practices by pharmacy in normal saline sale (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs started a large-scale territory-wide special operation codenamed "Guardian" on January 27 to inspect retail spots throughout Hong Kong that sell surgical masks and other common protective items. During a spot-check yesterday (February 13), a test-buy was made at a pharmacy in Mong Kok. One salesperson and one director were arrested on suspicion of engaging in unfair trade practices in the sale of normal saline, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). During the operation, 23 bottles of normal saline with an estimated market value of about \$575 were seized.

The operation was planned following the discovery that some pharmacies in Mong Kok were suspected of engaging in unfair trade practices in their sale of normal saline. Officers were deployed to conduct test-buy operations at different pharmacies. At the above-mentioned pharmacy, normal saline in plastic bottles labelled as "0.9% sodium chloride" and "solution for irrigation" were put on sale in a carton. Each bottled in containers of 1 000 milliliters, the normal saline was sold at a price of \$25 per bottle and five for \$100. A self-added leaflet, claiming that the normal saline could be used for hand and floor cleaning, was found putting on the carton. The description on the leaflet is not in line with the product description on the bottle, a

suspected violation of the TD0.

Custom officers immediately arrested a 30-year-old male salesperson, followed by a further arrest of a 30-year-old male director.

An investigation is ongoing and the normal saline seized will be taken to the Government Laboratory to establish its composition and safety.

The "Guardian" operation has been running out for 18 days as of yesterday. More than 1 900 officers have been mobilised to conduct over 12 000 inspections at retail spots in various districts to ensure that common protective items sold in the market comply with the TD0 and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGS0).

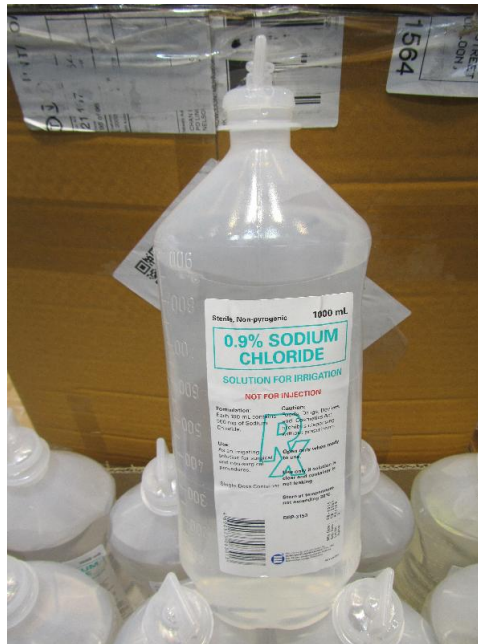
The operation will continue and Customs will carry on stepping up enforcement actions to combat activities that are in violation of the relevant ordinances. The department will continue to make prompt public updates if irregularities are detected.

Customs sternly reminds traders not to take advantage of the current situation and not to sell products using unfair trade practices. They must also not sell products with false origins or false trademarks, nor must they sell unsafe consumer goods. Immediate law enforcement actions will be taken and prosecutions will be made with sufficient evidence.

Under the TD0, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, or sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the CGS0, it is an offence to import, manufacture or supply consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirements for consumer goods. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on a subsequent conviction.

Customs also reminds consumers to purchase products from reputable shops. Apart from paying attention to the information given by a salesperson, they should also inspect the product description carefully and keep the transaction receipt. Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TD0 or the CGS0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Seventeen building plans approved in December

The Buildings Department approved 17 building plans in December, with four on Hong Kong Island, seven in Kowloon and six in the New Territories.

Of the approved plans, eight were for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, three were for commercial developments, two were for factory and industrial developments, and four were for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for works to start on 14 building projects which, when completed, will provide 66 578 square metres of gross floor area for domestic use involving 1 872 units, and 30 853 sq m of gross floor area for non-domestic use. The department has received notification of commencement of superstructure works for eight building projects.

The department also issued 22 occupation permits, with five on Hong Kong Island, 11 in Kowloon and six in the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation, the gross floor area for domestic use was 54 184 sq m involving 1 048 units, and 99 240 sq m was for non-domestic use.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in December totalled about \$4.3 billion.

In addition, 10 demolition consents involving 10 building structures

were issued.

The department received 2 630 reports about unauthorised building works (UBWs) in December and issued 448 removal orders on UBWs.

The full version of the Monthly Digest for December can be viewed on the Buildings Department's homepage (www.bd.gov.hk).

Arrangements for Council meeting to be held on February 19

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Considering the novel coronavirus outbreak remains severe, Legislative Council (LegCo), while performing its constitutional duties, should seek to minimize the risks of infection among meeting attendees and duty staff. The President of LegCo, Mr Andrew Leung, decided today (February 14) that the regular Council meeting originally scheduled for February 19 (Wednesday) will not be held. However, in view of the concerns of Members and the general public over the outbreak, the President directed another Council meeting to be held on the same day from 11am to 2pm during which the Chief Secretary for Administration together with the Secretaries of relevant Bureaux will answer questions raised by Members on the matters related to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Meanwhile, the arrangement for the meetings of LegCo Committees originally scheduled for February 19 to 21 may be subject to change. Members of the public may refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) or the "Calendar" on the LegCo Mobile App for the latest details of meetings.