

Import of poultry meat and products from Xichong County, Nanchong City in Sichuan Province, suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 10) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N6 sub-type avian influenza in Xichong County, Nanchong City in Sichuan Province, it has followed the existing approach for control of highly pathogenic avian influenza and taken recommendations from the World Organisation for Animal Health into account to suspend the import of poultry and poultry products, including poultry eggs, from an area within a radius of three kilometres from the said place for a period of 90 days, and from an area within a radius of 13km for 21 days, with immediate effect for the protection of public health in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for the CFS said that according to information from the General Administration of Customs, the outbreak does not affect any registered Mainland poultry farms that export to Hong Kong. No registered poultry meat or poultry egg processing plants are currently situated within the import restriction zone concerned.

The CFS will closely monitor the latest developments of the avian influenza case in the area and take appropriate follow-up action as necessary.

Latest arrangements on services of Transport Department's Licensing Offices

The Transport Department (TD) appealed to members of public today (February 10) that in order to reduce the risk of virus transmission when queuing at Licensing Offices, members of the public are advised to submit applications after the TD's resumption of full services unless there are urgent needs.

Licensing Offices started to provide limited services to members of the public from today until further notice. Details are as follows:

Licensing Offices at Admiralty, Cheung Sha Wan, Kwun Tong and Sha Tin

will suspend walk-in counter services, but will continue to process licensing applications submitted by applicants with scheduled appointments, by post or online (except for the direct issue of a full Hong Kong driving licence).

Applicants who have made an online appointment for renewal of a full driving licence/vehicle licence or an application for an international driving permit from February 10 to February 14 can visit the Licensing Office concerned at the scheduled time. Applicants with an appointment made for the period from 9am to 10am should visit the Licensing Office concerned on the scheduled appointment day after 10am.

Members of the public without prior booking may submit applications by post or online, or via the drop-in boxes placed at each Licensing Office from 10am to 5pm from Monday to Friday. Those submitting an application by post or via drop-in box should put the completed application form, all necessary documents and the appropriate fee (by crossed cheque payable to either "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR") into an envelope. Original identity documents or cash must not be sent by post or drop-in box. Members of the public should submit applications to the relevant Licensing Office in accordance with the types of licensing services currently provided by them.

Under the limited service arrangements, the TD will as far as practicable accord priority to processing renewal applications for licences/permits for which the validity period has expired or is about to expire.

Upon receipt of the completed application form, all necessary documents and the appropriate fee, the TD will send out the licence/permit for which application has been successful by registered mail as soon as practicable. If an application requires checking of an original identity document, or if necessary for other reasons, the TD will contact the applicant to make arrangements.

For enquiries, members of the public can contact Licensing Offices at the following numbers:

Hong Kong Licensing Office	2804 2636
Kowloon Licensing Office	2150 7728
Kwun Tong Licensing Office	2775 6835
Sha Tin Licensing Office	2606 1468

The TD apologises for inconvenience caused to members of the public as it is unable to provide full services due to the novel coronavirus.

EMSD announces latest sampling results for legionella at fresh water cooling towers

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (February 10) announced that the department tested 39 water samples collected from cooling towers in 30 buildings in its routine inspections in January this year. None of them was detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold, which is 1 000 colony-forming units per millilitre. The latest statistics are set out in Annex 1.

The EMSD also announced the locations of buildings which were served with nuisance notices during the preceding three-month period as the total legionella count was found in the fresh water cooling towers to be equal to or above the upper threshold. Details can be found in Annex 2. The EMSD publishes the latest statistics of the above information on a half-monthly basis on its website (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/other_regulatory_services/cooling_towers/water_sampling/index.html).

The EMSD reminds the owners of fresh water cooling towers that they have the responsibility to design, operate and maintain cooling towers properly. They should arrange regular inspections, timely maintenance and periodic testing of the water quality in their cooling towers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fresh Water Cooling Towers issued by the department to prevent the proliferation of legionella.

2020 Innovation and Technology Support Programme opens for applications

The Innovation and Technology Commission is inviting applications for the 2020 Innovation and Technology Support Programme from today (February 10) until May 8.

The Programme provides funding support for two types of research and development (R&D) projects undertaken by designated local public research institutes and R&D centres, namely Platform and Seed projects. Platform projects are applied R&D projects that are industry-oriented and have potential for commercialisation, while Seed projects are exploratory and forward-looking projects.

Further information is available on the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) website (www.itf.gov.hk). For enquiries, please contact the ITF Secretariat (Tel: 3655 5678; email: enquiry@itf.gov.hk).

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.