

Marine traffic control and safety measures to be followed at Lunar New Year Fireworks Display

With regard to the 2019 Lunar New Year Fireworks Display to be held on February 6, the Marine Department (MD) will implement marine traffic control and strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels on the event day to ensure that safety requirements are met.

The MD will establish a Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, where barges for the fireworks display will be anchored, from 2pm to about 11pm on the event day. All vessels will be prohibited from entering the area. A Restricted Area will be established in the Central Harbour from 7pm to about 9.15pm on the event day. Other than authorised vessels, no vessels will be allowed to enter. Scheduled ferry vessels with permission may continue services until 7.40pm.

For landside crowd control, all public landing steps within the Restricted Area will be closed temporarily starting from 6.45pm to about 9.15pm on the event day. Buffer Zones at Kowloon Public Pier, Kwun Tong Public Pier and Central Piers 9 and 10 will be established immediately after the event for safe and orderly disembarkation of passengers.

In addition, to ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the Restricted Area will be lifted in stages after the event. The Western Cordon Line will be lifted first at about 9pm. Spectator vessels behind the Western Cordon Line and those wishing to move to the east must follow the instructions of officers from the MD and the Police at the scene. The Eastern Cordon Line will be lifted later depending on traffic conditions in Victoria Harbour. It is anticipated that the Restricted Area will be lifted by about 9.15pm.

Officers from the MD and the Police will also maintain order at major landing facilities after the event. In order to ensure the smooth and safe disembarkation of passengers, coxswains and crew members should remind passengers to pack their personal belongings early before the vessels arrive alongside the landing steps, as well as assist passengers to disembark. Coxswains and passengers should follow the guidance of the MD and the Police at the scene.

The MD and the Marine Police will also strengthen law enforcement, especially on speeding and overloading. Coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels should check again and reconfirm that the operating licence, the certificate of survey and the third party risk insurance are valid before setting sail.

Officers from the MD will strengthen the inspection of spectator

vessels. Requirements include providing sufficient life-saving appliances on board, ensuring that children wear a lifejacket at all times and that coxswains keep a passenger and crew list on board.

If any vessel fails to meet these requirements, inspecting officers will issue directions at the scene and request the person-in-charge of the vessel to take remedial action. If the person-in-charge of the vessel refuses to comply with the directions, the department will take the necessary follow-up action, such as prohibiting the vessel from departing or considering prosecution.

MD Notice No. 18 of 2019 on the marine traffic control and safety measures has been issued and is available for viewing on the MD's website (www.mardep.gov.hk).

Provisional statistics of restaurant receipts and purchases for fourth quarter of 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest provisional figures on restaurant receipts and purchases today (February 1).

The value of total receipts of the restaurants sector in the fourth quarter of 2018, provisionally estimated at \$30.4 billion, increased by 2.2% over a year earlier. Over the same period, the provisional estimate of the value of total purchases by restaurants increased by 1.7% to \$9.6 billion.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total restaurant receipts decreased by 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2018 compared with a year earlier.

Analysed by type of restaurant and comparing the fourth quarter of 2018 with the fourth quarter of 2017, total receipts of Chinese restaurants decreased by 0.8% in value and 3.2% in volume. Total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants increased by 4.4% in value and 2.2% in volume. Total receipts of fast food shops increased by 4.1% in value and 0.2% in volume. Total receipts of bars increased by 2.5% in value but decreased by 1.2% in volume. As for miscellaneous eating and drinking places, total receipts increased by 8.8% in value and 5.0% in volume.

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of total restaurant receipts decreased by 0.9% in value and 1.6% in volume in the fourth quarter of 2018 compared with the preceding quarter.

For 2018 as a whole, the value of total receipts of the restaurants

sector was provisionally estimated at \$119.5 billion, representing an increase of 6.0% in value and 3.1% in volume compared with the whole year of 2017. Over the same period, the provisional estimate of the total purchases of restaurants increased by 4.7% to \$38.0 billion.

Analysed by type of restaurant and comparing the whole year of 2018 with the whole year of 2017, total receipts of Chinese restaurants increased by 4.8% in value and 2.1% in volume. Total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants increased by 7.6% in value and 5.1% in volume. Total receipts of fast food shops increased by 5.1% in value and 1.0% in volume. Total receipts of bars increased by 6.9% in value and 6.5% in volume. As for miscellaneous eating and drinking places, total receipts increased by 10.4% in value and 6.8% in volume.

To facilitate further understanding of the short-term business performance of the restaurants sector, statistics in respect of the restaurant receipts and purchases in individual months of the reference quarter are also compiled.

Analysed by month, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total receipts of the restaurants sector increased by 1.2%, 3.2% and 2.3% respectively in October, November and December 2018, compared with the corresponding months a year earlier.

After discounting the effect of price changes, it was provisionally estimated that total restaurant receipts decreased by 1.6%, increased by 0.4% and decreased by 0.3% in volume respectively in October, November and December 2018, compared with the corresponding months a year earlier.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures of restaurant receipts by type of restaurant and total purchases by the restaurants sector for the third quarter of 2018 as well as the provisional figures for the fourth quarter of 2018.

Table 2 and Table 3 present the revised value and volume indices respectively of restaurant receipts by type of restaurant for the third quarter of 2018 and the provisional indices for the fourth quarter of 2018.

Table 4 presents the year-on-year rate of change in total restaurant receipts in value and volume terms based on the original quarterly series, as well as the quarter-to-quarter rate of change based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The revised figures on restaurant receipts and purchases for the fourth quarter of 2018 (with breakdown by month) will be released through the website of C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/bbs.jsp) and relevant publications of the Department from March 21, 2019.

The classification of restaurants follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) 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 on Quarterly Survey of Restaurant Receipts and Purchases". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080002).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel: 3903 7401; email: qsr@censtatd.gov.hk).

Red tides sighted

Four red tides have been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (February 1).

The first red tide was spotted by staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on January 29 at Tolo Harbour. The second red tide was spotted by a member of the public on January 30 at Inner Port Shelter and Port Shelter including the Ma Nam Wat Fish Culture Zone. The third red tide was spotted by staff of the Environmental Protection Department on January 31 at Sha Tin Hoi. These three red tides still persist.

In addition, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department spotted a red tide at Silverstrand Beach, Sai Kung, on January 31. The red flag was hoisted immediately at the beach. The red tide has dissipated.

No associated death of fish has been reported so far in all four red tides.

A spokesman for the working group said, "All four red tides were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters and is non-toxic."

The AFCD urged mariculturists at the Yim Tin Tsai, Yim Tin Tsai (East), Yung Shue Au, Lo Fu Wat, Ma Nam Wat, Kau Sai, Kai Lung Wan, Tai Tau Chau and Leung Shuen Wan fish culture zones to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (February 1) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From January 25 to 31, the CHP recorded two imported DF cases. The patients had been to Indonesia and Maldives respectively during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (January 31), 14 cases had been confirmed this year, all of which were imported cases. The cases were mainly imported from Indonesia (three), Maldives (three), Malaysia (two), the Philippines (two) and Thailand (two).

DF remains endemic in some areas of Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2019 revealed that 2 834 cases had been recorded in Thailand, 1 015 cases in Singapore (since December 30, 2018) and 22 in Japan.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or exposed parts of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF and Zika virus infection should apply insect repellent for 14 days or at least 21 days respectively upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;

- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#) for details.

Income and asset limits of Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme to be raised

The Government announced today (February 1) that the income and asset limits of the individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme will be raised starting from the claim month of February 2019. The new limits, detailed in the Annex, are applicable to applications for subsidy for that month onwards.

Starting from April 1, the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency will take up the processing of individual-based WITS applications from the Labour Department (LD). The LD will issue letters to current recipients of the individual-based WITS on the detailed arrangements. Of note, the application claim period will be revised from the "past six to 12 calendar months" now to the "immediate past six calendar months" before the submission of an application. The WFAO will put in place transitional arrangements to assist applicants in lodging their applications.

Before April 1, enquiries about the WITS Scheme can be made at its 24-hour hotline 2717 1771 (handled by 1823) or the enquiry counters of the LD's WITS Division at Unit 1225, 12/F, Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay. Details of the Scheme are also available at the LD's homepage (www.labour.gov.hk).

As for the details of individual-based WITS applications from April 1 and transitional arrangements, please call the WFAO's 24-hour hotline 2558 3000, or approach the enquiry counters on 9/F, 181 Hoi Bun Road, Kwun Tong. Further details will also be uploaded to the new website of the WITS

Scheme later.