

Import of poultry meat and products from Czech Republic and Vinnytsia Oblast in Ukraine suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 21) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in the Czech Republic and an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in Vinnytsia Oblast in Ukraine, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that since Hong Kong has not established any protocol with the Czech Republic for import of poultry meat and eggs, there is no import of such commodities from the country. According to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 3 100 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and 59.7 million poultry eggs from Ukraine in the first nine months of last year.

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

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 21) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	40
Affected area involved	Saudi Arabia
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Tuen Mun Hospital
Condition	Stable

MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending
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"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed relevant symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

[Cluster of Influenza A cases in Ruttonjee and Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Ruttonjee and Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals made the following announcement today (January 21):

Twelve male patients (aged 45 to 96) of a Geriatric Rehabilitation and Extended Care Ward presented with respiratory symptoms since January 17. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients and their test results were positive for Influenza A.

Admission to the ward has been suspended. Visiting has also been suspended except in special circumstances. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Operators and managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Four women were fined \$5,000 to \$6,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (January 21) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in August last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected four suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Wang Fung Terrace in Tai Hang and King's Road and Chun Yeung Street in North Point. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The women responsible for operating and managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Operator fined for illegal club operation

A man was fined \$2,500 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (January 21) for contravening the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance.

The courts heard that in June last year, officers from the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department conducted an inspection at a club on Lung King Street in Wan Chai, which had been operating with a certificate of compliance (CoC).

OLA officers posed as customers and patronised the club for drinks without being asked to show their membership status or being invited to join the club as members. Condition 12 of the CoC was breached. The man, being the CoC holder of the club, was charged with contravening section 21(2) of the Ordinance.

A spokesman for the department reminded all CoC holders to comply with the conditions as stipulated therein. Enforcement action will continue to be taken against illegal club operations.