

Public hospitals further enhances surveillance and infection control measures

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) convened the Central Command Committee meeting today (January 8) and decided to further enhance the surveillance and infection control measures in public hospitals, amid exploring the feasibility of deferring some non-emergency services so as to centralise resources and manpower to cope with the suspected cases related to the viral pneumonia with unknown cause in Wuhan, and try to allay the pressure of frontline healthcare workers as far as possible.

The following enhanced measures have been implemented with immediate effect:

- Enhance the HA laboratory service. The rapid test result can be available as early as before 24 hours so as to confirm whether the patients are infected with infectious diseases and to discharge patients without isolation need to other wards for further treatment;
- Adjust ventilation system to increase fresh air exchange in public hospitals and clinics so as to enhance air flow and to reduce the risk of spreading virus;
- Transfer stable patient to rehabilitation or convalescence wards, and in accordance to the agreement with two private hospitals to transfer out patients for continuous treatment in order to vacate acute beds to meet emergency need; and
- Depending on the situation, HA will explore the feasibility to defer the elective surgeries and non-emergency services.

"Since the activation of Serious Response Level last Saturday, a series of response measures have been implemented in public hospitals. During winter surge, number of patients requiring public hospital services keeps increasing, amid from handling the suspected cases related to the viral pneumonia with unknown cause in Wuhan, leading to increasing workload of healthcare workers in public hospitals. We will monitor the situation and implement every feasible measure to alleviate the workload of frontline healthcare workers and to avoid any hospital emergency service being affected," spokesperson for HA said.

The current stockpile of personal protection equipment in public hospitals exceeds 90-days consumption and public hospitals have a total of about 1 400 negative pressure insulation beds. Public hospitals will allocate the patients without isolation need flexibly to facilitate patients who require isolation to admit to those beds accordingly. HA will closely monitor

the usage of isolation beds and the stockpile of personal protection equipment, and will allocate flexibly through central coordination mechanism so as to encounter emergency situation.

HA will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest development and to timely inform the public and healthcare workers the latest information.

[Hong Kong Customs combats illicit cigarette smuggling activities \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (January 8) seized about 3.2 million suspected illicit cigarettes in Yuen Long. Together with the case effected on January 6 at Shenzhen Bay Control Point, Customs seized a total of about 4 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$11 million and a duty potential of about \$7.6 million.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation in San Tin, Yuen Long today, Customs officers seized a total of about 3.2 million suspected illicit cigarettes from a truck and a metal shed. Two men, aged 42 and 50, were arrested.

Also, Customs seized about 800 000 suspected illicit cigarettes on board an incoming truck at Shenzhen Bay Control Point on January 6. A 48-year-old male driver was arrested.

Investigations of the cases are ongoing.

Customs will continue to step up enforcement against different kinds of illicit cigarette activities before the coming Lunar New Year holiday.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Appeal for information on missing man in Kowloon City

Police today (January 8) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Kowloon City.

Yeung Sai-lung, aged 83, went missing after he left an elderly home on Nga Tsin Long Road yesterday (January 7) morning. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.6 metres tall, 65 kilograms in weight and of fat built. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short grey hair. He was last seen wearing a brown sweater, grey trousers and black slippers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8038 or 9020 6542 or email to rmpu-kw-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



LCQ15: Government service contracts

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

The Government has issued internal guidelines encouraging government departments to adopt, when procuring service contracts which rely heavily on the engagement of non-skilled employees, a marking scheme comprising technical and price aspects in evaluating tenders. Under the new marking scheme which has been implemented since April 1, 2019, the technical weighting in marking has increased from the range of 30% to 40% in the past to the range of 50% to 70%, the price weighting in marking has decreased from the range of 60% to 70% to the range of 30% to 50%, and the weighting of wage level in the technical assessment must not be lower than 25%. Besides, the hourly wage of such employees must not be lower than the statutory minimum wage rate. Regarding government service contracts, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following details of the cleansing service and security service contracts awarded by the four major procuring government departments (namely, (i) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, (ii) Leisure and Cultural Services Department, (iii) Government Property Agency and (iv) Housing Department) respectively in the previous two financial years and the current financial year (up to December 2019):

(A) (a) the total number of contracts and, among them, the respective numbers of those awarded to (b) contractors with the lowest bids and (c) contractors with the lowest marks on wage levels (set out in tables of the same format as Table 1);

Table 1

Financial year: _____

| Number of contracts | Cleansing service | | | | | Security service | | | | | Total |
|---------------------|-------------------|------|-------|------|----------|------------------|------|-------|------|----------|-------|
| | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) | Subtotal | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) | Subtotal | |
| (a) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (b) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (c) | | | | | | | | | | | |

(B) (a) the lower quartile, (b) the median and (c) the upper quartile hourly wages as pledged in the contracts (set out in tables of the same format as Table 2); and

Table 2

Financial year: _____

| Hourly wage | Cleansing service | | | | Security service | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-------|------|------------------|------|-------|------|
| | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) |
| (a) | | | | | | | | |
| (b) | | | | | | | | |
| (c) | | | | | | | | |

(C) the number of non-skilled employees engaged, with a breakdown by the range of hourly wages as pledged in the contracts (i.e. (a) \$34.5 or below, (b) \$34.6 to \$35.5, (c) \$35.6 to \$36.5, (d) \$36.6 to \$37.5, (e) \$37.6 to \$38.5, (f) \$38.6 to \$39.5, (g) \$39.6 to \$40.5, (h) \$40.6 to \$41.5, (i) \$41.6 to \$42.5, (j) \$42.6 to \$43.5, (k) \$43.6 to \$44.5, (l) \$44.6 to \$45.5, (m) \$45.6 to \$46.5, (n) \$46.6 to \$47.5, and (o) \$47.6 or above) (rounded to the nearest \$0.1) (set out in tables of the same format as Table 3);

Table 3

Financial year: _____

| Hourly wage | Cleansing service | | | | | Security service | | | | | Total |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-------|------|----------|------------------|------|-------|------|----------|-------|
| | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) | Subtotal | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) | Subtotal | |
| (a) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ... | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (o) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | |

(2) of the number of non-skilled employees engaged by the contractors of the Housing Department in the current financial year (up to December 2019), and set out in Table 4 a breakdown by the type of service (i.e. (i) cleansing service and (ii) security service) and the range of hourly wages as pledged in the contracts (as mentioned in (1) (C) above);

Table 4

| Type of service | Hourly wage | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | (a) | ... | (o) |
| (i) | | | |
| (ii) | | | |
| Total | | | |

(3) of the details of the tendering exercises conducted by each of the aforesaid departments in the current financial year (up to December 2019) in respect of cleansing service and security service respectively, including the service districts, the effective dates of the new contracts, as well as the name of contractors and the contract value of new and old contracts respectively; and

(4) whether it has reviewed the effectiveness of the new marking scheme in improving the employment terms of non-skilled employees; if so, of the criteria adopted for and the outcome of the review; if not, whether it will conduct such a review, as well as the relevant timetable?

Reply:

President,

We have consulted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Government Property Agency (GPA) and Housing Department (HD) (being the executive arm of the Housing Authority (HA)). Reply to each part of the question is as follows:

(1) The breakdown of information requested in Part (A), (B) and (C) of the question of the service contracts that rely heavily on the deployment of non-skilled workers (service contracts) tendered and awarded in the 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 (up to November 30, 2019) financial years is set out at Annexes 1 – 3. GPA did not award any such service contract during the period.

(2) Information on the committed hourly wages pledged by government service contractors (GSCs) and the number of non-skilled workers under the service contracts tendered and awarded by HD on behalf of HA in the 2019-20 financial year (up to November 30, 2019) is at Annex 4.

(3) Details of the service contracts already tendered or under tendering by the four major procuring departments are set out at Annex 5.

(4) The new measures are a major step forward in according better protection to non-skilled workers engaged by GSCs. While the new measures, implemented since April 2019, have taken effect for less than one year, initially statistics reveal that the wage level of non-skilled workers engaged under the service contracts has increased under the new measures. The Government will keep in view the implementation of the new measures, and will consider areas for further improvement on an ongoing basis.

Information as at December 2019 is still under compilation and hence not available.

Import of poultry meat and products from Krasnostawski District of

Lubelskie and Ostrowski District of Wielkopolskie in Poland suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 8) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) regarding outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in the Krasnostawski District of Lubelskie and Ostrowski District of Wielkopolskie in Poland, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products, including poultry eggs, from these areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong imported about 13 060 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and 23.2 million poultry eggs from Poland in the first nine months of last year, according to the Census and Statistics Department.

"The CFS has contacted the Polish 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.