

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a work accident that happened at a construction site in Kowloon City this morning (December 19), in which a male worker was crushed to death by an excavator in operation. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expresses its deepest sympathies to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and will issue suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending the use of the mobile machinery on site. The contractors cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of

other workers.

“Unlocking the Secrets – The Science of Conservation at The Palace Museum” exhibition to reveal science behind relic conservation (with photos)

To tie in with the 600th anniversary of the Forbidden City in 2020, the Hong Kong Science Museum is presenting the new special exhibition "Unlocking the Secrets – The Science of Conservation at The Palace Museum". Through the display of more than 100 artefacts of various types from the Palace Museum collection, ranging from bronzes, clocks, textiles, thangkas, wood furniture, lacquerware and inlaid works to ceramics, calligraphy and hand-painted copies of ancient paintings, the exhibition highlights the application of science and technology in conservation, as well as reveals the stories behind all the work.

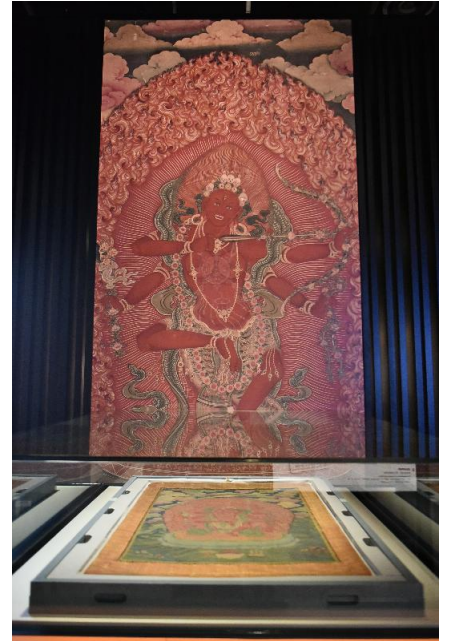
The exhibition also presents the work of the Conservation Office by showcasing intriguing restoration cases, including the conservation of the century-old No. 313 train coach and the China trade painting "The Emperor Holding Court in the Imperial Winter Palace, Peking". Visitors can learn more about the work and professional skills of conservators as well as their mission to preserve Hong Kong's heritage assets.

To complement the exhibition, the Hong Kong Science Museum will launch a series of interactive family activities, including demonstrations and workshops conducted by conservators from the Palace Museum, guided tours featuring theatrical plays and storytelling to give a better understanding of cultural conservation work, visits to conservation laboratories, and unlocking the secrets of toys by making use of computed radiography. Through hands-on interaction, visitors will be able to deepen their understanding of exquisite traditional Chinese craftsmanship as well as the scientific principles and technologies applied in restoration of objects.

The exhibition is jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Palace Museum, and jointly organised by the Hong Kong Science Museum, the Palace Museum and the Conservation Office. The exhibition is solely sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust under the Hong Kong Jockey Club Series.

The exhibition will run until March 18 next year and is being held at the G/F Exhibition Hall of the Hong Kong Science Museum, which is located at 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East. For details of the exhibition,

please visit the website at hk.science.museum/ms/con2019, or call 2732 3232 for enquiries.





Chilled swordfish sample imported from Philippines detected with methylmercury exceeding legal limit

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 19) that a sample of chilled swordfish imported from the Philippines was found to contain a metal contaminant, methylmercury, at a level exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the abovementioned sample at import level for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that it contained methylmercury at a level of 1.1 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 0.5 ppm."

The spokesman said the CFS had informed the importer concerned of the irregularity and had requested it to stop sale of the affected product.

"Methylmercury is the major form of mercury in fish. Mercury may affect the nervous system, particularly the developing brain. At high levels, mercury can affect foetal brain development, and affect vision, hearing, muscle co-ordination and memory in adults. Furthermore, as some international organisations such as the World Health Organization have pointed out, consuming predatory fish species is the main source of mercury intake for human beings. The report of the CFS' Total Diet Study has also pointed out that large fish or predatory fish species may contain high mercury levels (for example, tuna, alfonso, shark, swordfish, marlin, orange roughy and king mackerel). Hence, groups particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of mercury, such as pregnant women, women planning pregnancy and young children, should opt for fish that are smaller in size for consumption and avoid consumption of the above-mentioned types of fish which may contain high mercury levels. This is to minimise the health risk posed to the foetus, infants and young children by excessive exposure to metal contaminants in

food," he added.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination above the legal limit may be prosecuted and is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

"People are advised to maintain a balanced and varied diet. To avoid health risks posed by excessive intake of metallic contaminants, pregnant women, women planning pregnancy and young children should avoid eating large or predatory fish," the spokesman said.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.

Employer fined for violation of safety legislation

â€‹The Incorporated Management Committee of Tseung Kwan O Catholic Primary School was fined \$7,500 at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (December 19) for violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on October 22, 2018, at a primary school in Tseung Kwan O. While a janitor was on his way to the entrance gate, he tripped over a vehicular gate stopper protruding from the ground and struck his head against a wall. He sustained a serious head injury and passed away a few weeks later.

Task Group to look into sustainability of Hospital Authority

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) Chairman Mr Henry Fan today (December 19) announced the establishment of a Task Group on Sustainability to look into major sustainability issues of the HA following the deliberation and approval

by the HA Board at the Administrative Operational Meeting.

"During earlier discussions in the Board, there have been concerns that the HA's operation would not be sustainable in the long run against the ever-growing demand for service," said Mr Fan.

"Having regard to the HA's statutory responsibility to advise the Government of the needs and resources required for public hospital services, we should critically examine the major sustainability challenges we are facing, with a view to formulating strategic directions for the HA.

"The formulation of strategic directions is important for HA medium and long-term planning. With that, the HA could formulate concrete proposals for consideration by the established governance of the Board for implementation subject to required resource support," added Mr Fan.

While there is an array of issues affecting the HA's sustainability, the Task Group will focus on the following priority items, taking into account their urgency and impact:

1. Strategy for retaining manpower;
2. Strategy for managing the waiting time of first attendance of specialist out-patient clinic; and
3. Strategy for developing smart hospitals.

Membership of the Task Group has been extended to all interested Board Members for participation and inclusion of talents and expertise. A total of 17 HA Board Members have agreed to join, including the Chairman, Mr Fan.

The Task Group will commence work shortly and will regularly report to the HA Executive Committee, with periodic reports of major progress to the HA Board as appropriate.