

Three offenders fined for illegal removal of asbestos

A person-in-charge of works and two residential unit owners were respectively convicted at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (December 19) and at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts on December 12 and December 10 for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) by illegally demolishing asbestos-containing materials. They were fined a total of \$16,000.

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said that the department conducted follow-up inspections after receiving reports from members of the public in May and June this year that corrugated asbestos cement sheet (CACS) roofing was being illegally dismantled at premises at Kwai Fat Building in Kwai Chung, Sun On Building in Sham Shui Po and Mei Kei Mansion in Cheung Sha Wan. After investigation, the EPD gathered evidence showing that in each of the three cases, written notice had not been given to the department at least 28 days in advance of the commencement of the works in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. In one of the cases, no registered asbestos contractor was hired to carry out demolition of CACS roofing. The EPD therefore initiated prosecutions against the person-in-charge of the works and the residential unit owners in accordance with the APCO.

The spokesman reminded persons-in-charge of works and residential property owners that if their renovation and refurbishment works at buildings involve demolition of asbestos-containing materials, they must hire registered asbestos contractors to carry out the works in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and the code of practice on asbestos control to avoid the release of asbestos fibres and to protect the health of members of the public and the workers concerned in the projects. Offenders will be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. Meanwhile, contractors who carry out works involving asbestos must give not less than 28 days' written notice to the EPD prior to the commencement of such works. Otherwise, they will be liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000.

Members of the public can help combat illegal activities and safeguard public health by calling the EPD departmental hotline at 2838 3111 to make a report if they witness any illegal works involving asbestos.

SCS grieves over passing of Workman II

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, today (December 19) expressed deep sorrow over the passing of Workman II Ms Cheng Yin-sang of the

Social Welfare Department. Ms Cheng had finished her document delivery duty and was travelling by bus back to her office when the bus crashed in a serious traffic accident on Fanling Highway yesterday (December 18).

Mr Law said, "On behalf of the civil service, I offer my deepest condolences to her family.

"The Civil Service Bureau has contacted the Social Welfare Department and will make every effort to help the family during this sad and difficult period."

[Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 19) closely monitoring 10 additional cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by Saudi Arabia from November 1 to 30. The CHP again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, all 10 additional cases were male patients with underlying illnesses, with ages from 31 to 83. Among them, five had exposure to camels and consumed camel milk, and one has passed away.

According to the latest information, 2 494 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 858 deaths), including 2 275 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 2 102 in Saudi Arabia, 88 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 24 in Oman, 19 in Qatar, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"As countries in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, continue to report MERS cases from time to time, travellers should refrain from going to farms, barns or markets with camels and avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry. Most of the cases reported in the Middle East had a history of exposure to camels, consumption of camel milk or contact with other MERS patients," the spokesman said.

"Scientific evidence has shown that camels are reservoirs for MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). Camels infected with MERS-CoV may not show any signs of infection. Infected animals may shed MERS-CoV through nasal and eye discharge and faeces, and potentially in their milk and urine. The virus may also be found in the raw organs and meat of infected animals. Therefore, the

best protection is to practise good hygiene and avoid direct contact with all of these," the spokesman added.

From time to time, suspected MERS cases reported to the CHP for investigation involve patients with a history of contact with camels in the Middle East. The CHP strongly advises 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-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 page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO'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](#).

[Phishing email related to DBS Bank \(Hong Kong\) Limited](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited on phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[Labour Department investigates fatal](#)

work accident in Kowloon City

The Labour Department (LD) is investigating a fatal work accident in Kowloon City this morning (December 19), in which a man died.

The LD has immediately deployed staff to the scene upon receiving a report of the accident, and is now conducting an investigation to look into its cause.