

# Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (November 29) released the latest grading of water quality for eight gazetted beaches that are open for swimming. Other beaches have been closed to swimmers since November 1 for the winter season.

Eight beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Golden Beach	Stanley Main Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's website on Beach Water Quality ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

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## CHP closely monitors plague cases in

# Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (November 29) closely monitoring an additional plague case affecting a herder in Inner Mongolia.

According to the Health Commission of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the patient was diagnosed to have bubonic plague on November 27 and had been to a place where plague was known to occur. The patient has been admitted to hospital for treatment under isolation and is in stable condition. Four close contacts have remained asymptomatic so far, and are under medical surveillance.

So far, four cases of plague have been confirmed in the Mainland since November 2019. The other three cases include two cases of pneumonic plague in Beijing, involving a couple from Inner Mongolia; and a case of bubonic plague, involving a man in Inner Mongolia. The CHP issued press releases on these cases on November 14 and 18 respectively to urge the community to heighten their vigilance against plague. According to the latest information from the National Health Commission, all close contacts of the three patients have remained asymptomatic and were released from medical surveillance. As of yesterday (November 28), apart from the above four plague cases, no additional cases have been reported in the Mainland thereafter.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Regarding the recent plague cases that occurred in the Mainland, the CHP has communicated with the National Health Commission to understand the latest situation for risk assessment."

The spokesman said, "Plague is transmitted from an infected animal (mainly rodents) to humans through the bite of its fleas. Plague can also be contracted when cuts or other breaks in the skin come into contact with the body fluid or tissue of infected animals."

The spokesman reminded travellers to avoid visiting plague-endemic areas. They should also heighten vigilance on rodents and prevent flea bites. Insect repellents against mosquitoes may equally prevent bites from fleas and other blood-sucking insects. Formulations in lotions or sprays should contain DEET, IR3535 or icaridin (also known as picaridin) as active ingredients. The public should refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#).

"Travellers returning from affected areas with a sudden onset of fever, chills, body pains or chest discomfort should seek medical advice as soon as possible and reveal their travel history for prompt investigation and management. Plague is a statutorily notifiable disease and doctors should report suspected or confirmed cases to the CHP for investigations and control," the spokesman added.

Travellers should take heed of the health advice below during travel:

- Prevent flea bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and trousers, and applying insect repellent/insecticide. DEET-containing insect repellent can be applied to exposed skin and clothing, while insecticide containing permethrin can be applied to clothing, not the skin;
- Avoid going to rural areas, camping or hunting;
- Never touch rodents, dead animals and their tissues or contaminated materials;
- Avoid close contact with patients, especially those with cough or chest infection;
- Avoid going to crowded areas;
- Seek medical care immediately in case of a sudden onset of fever, chills, painful lymph nodes, difficulty in breathing with coughing and/or blood-tainted sputum; and
- Consult a doctor immediately after contact or exposure to pneumonic plague patients or high-risk exposures, such as bites from fleas or direct contact with body fluids or tissues of potentially infected animals, for prompt assessment of the need for preventive medication.

Travellers may visit the CHP's [plague page](#), [Travel Health News](#) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's [advice on rodent control](#) for details.

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## **[TD reminds public on end of special free ferry services between Hung Hom/Kowloon City and Wan Chai tonight](#)**

The Transport Department today (November 29) reminded members of the public that since the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT) has reopened and traffic has generally returned to normal, the two routes of special free ferry services between Kowloon City and Wan Chai and between Hung Hom and Wan Chai provided for the closure of the CHT will cease operation tonight. The last ferry departure will be at 7pm.

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## **[Hospital Authority releases Medication Safety Bulletin](#)**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority today (November 29) published the latest issue of the biannual Medication Safety Bulletin (MSB). This issue highlights the safe application of two drugs, including the risk minimisation measures of valproate to help patients understand the possible harmful effects to the foetus while taking the medication and the proper dosage of methotrexate for different types of patients as well as its global targeted medication safety best practice.

This issue also describes the experience of Kowloon West Cluster in using the Inpatient Medication Entry to facilitate correct prescribing of insulin infusions.

The publication has already been posted on the web for sharing with healthcare professionals. Members of the public are also welcome to browse it at the following link: [www.ha.org.hk/msb](http://www.ha.org.hk/msb). MSB is published every six months, on the last Fridays of May and November. The next issue will be published on May 29, 2020.

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## **Key statistics on operating characteristics of import/export, wholesale and retail trades, and accommodation and food services sectors in 2018**

According to the results of the 2018 Annual Survey of Economic Activities – Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail Trades, and Accommodation and Food Services Sectors released today (November 29) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), total receipts (i.e. sales and other receipts) of the import/export, wholesale and retail trades, and accommodation and food services sectors amounted to \$5,394.5 billion in 2018, representing an increase of 7.0% compared with 2017; on a per establishment basis, total receipts increased by 6.6% compared with 2017 to \$35.3 million in 2018.

Operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees of the above sectors altogether amounted to \$4,985.1 billion in 2018, representing an increase of 6.9% compared with 2017; on a per establishment basis, they altogether increased by 6.6% compared with 2017 to \$32.6 million in 2018.

Gross surplus of the sectors, which is equal to total receipts less operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees, increased by 8.2% compared with 2017 to \$409.5 billion in 2018; on a per

establishment basis, gross surplus was \$2.7 million in 2018, which increased by 7.8% compared with 2017. For all these sectors taken together, gross surplus accounted for 7.6% of total receipts in 2018, which was similar to that in 2017.

Value added of the sectors, which is a measure of their total contribution to Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product, amounted to \$683.1 billion in 2018, which increased by 5.8% compared with 2017; on a per establishment basis, value added was \$4.5 million in 2018, which increased by 5.4% compared with 2017.

According to the survey results, it was estimated that the aforementioned sectors comprised some 153 000 establishments and engaged about 1 095 600 persons, or an average of 7.2 persons per establishment, in 2018.

In the import/export trade, total receipts amounted to \$4,261.1 billion while operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees totalled \$3,930.1 billion in 2018. Gross surplus increased from \$305.9 billion in 2017 to \$330.9 billion in 2018, accounting for 7.8% of total receipts in 2018. Value added increased by 4.5% compared with 2017 to \$478.3 billion.

In the wholesale trade, total receipts amounted to \$324.2 billion while operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees totalled \$315.3 billion in 2018. Gross surplus increased from \$8.1 billion in 2017 to \$8.9 billion in 2018, accounting for 2.7% of total receipts in 2018. Value added increased by 7.6% compared with 2017 to \$23.6 billion.

In the retail trade, total receipts amounted to \$600.8 billion while operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees totalled \$559.2 billion in 2018. Gross surplus increased from \$39.2 billion in 2017 to \$41.6 billion in 2018, accounting for 6.9% of total receipts in 2018. Value added increased by 7.0% compared with 2017 to \$89.9 billion.

In the accommodation services sector which covers hotels, guesthouses, boarding houses and other establishments providing short term accommodation, total receipts amounted to \$51.0 billion while operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees totalled \$34.0 billion in 2018. Gross surplus increased from \$14.7 billion in 2017 to \$17.0 billion in 2018, accounting for 33.3% of total receipts in 2018. Value added increased by 13.1% compared with 2017 to \$32.2 billion.

In the food services sector which mainly covers restaurants, total receipts amounted to \$157.5 billion while operating expenses, cost of goods sold and compensation of employees totalled \$146.5 billion in 2018. Gross surplus increased from \$10.5 billion in 2017 to \$11.0 billion in 2018, accounting for 7.0% of total receipts in 2018. Value added increased by 10.0% compared with 2017 to \$59.1 billion.

Selected statistics for the import/export, wholesale and retail trades, and accommodation and food services sectors in 2017 and 2018 are shown in the

attached table.

More detailed survey results on the import/export, wholesale and retail trades, and accommodation and food services sectors will be given in the report "Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail Trades, and Accommodation and Food Services Sectors in 2018". Users can download this report (in PDF format) free of charge at the website of C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080014](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080014)) as from end-December 2019.

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7399; email: [asw@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:asw@censtatd.gov.hk)).