

Successful prosecutions by EPD for two cases of illegal waste disposal following blitz operation

Three persons were convicted and fined a total of \$12,000 today (July 8) at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) as a result of illegal waste disposal at Chung Hom Kok Road and Pak Pat Shan Road in the Southern District of Hong Kong Island.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spares no effort to combat illegal waste disposal activities on all fronts. In addition to being assisted by surveillance camera systems in law enforcement, the EPD enhances inspections of fly-tipping black spots in various districts and carries out blitz operations according to a risk-based strategy. In December last year, the EPD successfully intercepted two cases of illegal waste disposal at Chung Hom Kok Road in Stanley and Pak Pat Shan Road in Tai Tam. Three offenders were caught in the blitz operation, which was proactively carried out in Southern District by the EPD based on analysis of intelligence and information collected at the scene. The waste deposited, including debris and waste produced from demolition in renovation works, not only created obstruction to passages, but also caused environmental hygiene problems.

A spokesman for the EPD reminded all members of the renovation, construction and transportation sectors that they must properly deliver commercial and industrial waste as well as construction waste to government waste management facilities in accordance with the law. Under the WDO, first-time offenders who dispose of waste in public places are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.

Test results of targeted surveillance on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms in ready-to-eat food all satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 8) announced the results of a recently completed targeted food surveillance project on coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms (including *Staphylococcus aureus*) in ready-to-eat food. All samples passed the test.

A spokesman for the CFS said that a total of 300 ready-to-eat food samples were collected from different retail outlets (including online retailers) and food factories for testing of coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms this year. The samples included meat, poultry and their products (for example shredded chicken, siu mei and lo mei), salad, sashimi and sushi, dessert, Chinese cold dishes, sandwiches and steamed rice rolls.

The spokesman pointed out that *Staphylococcus aureus* is a common bacterium that can cause food poisoning. It exists widely in the environment and is commonly found in the nasal cavity, throat, hair and skin of healthy individuals. It is also present in large numbers in wounds and infected regions. If food handlers do not observe good personal hygiene, *Staphylococcus aureus* can pass to foods from them. Foods stored at ambient temperature for a prolonged period will allow the toxin-producing *Staphylococcus aureus* to multiply and form elaborate enterotoxins which can cause food poisoning. Although most cases of infection are caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*, other coagulase-positive staphylococci species can also produce enterotoxins which can lead to food poisoning.

Food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms is usually associated with foods that require considerable manual handling during preparation and no subsequent cooking is required before consumption. The poisoning risk cannot be eliminated by reheating as enterotoxins produced by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms cannot be destroyed under normal cooking temperatures. Common symptoms of food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms include nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain, often accompanied by diarrhoea.

"Despite the fact that test results of the samples were all satisfactory, the trade and the public should not take the risk lightly. They should always maintain good personal, environmental and food hygiene to ensure food safety. To prevent food poisoning caused by coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms, members of the public are reminded to keep perishable foods or leftovers at or below 4 degrees Celsius or above 60 degrees C. The trade should adhere to the Good Manufacturing Practice that cooked food should be cooled from 60 degrees C to 20 degrees C as quickly as possible (within two hours), and from 20 degrees C to 4 degrees C within four hours or less," the spokesman said.

Task Force on School-based Management Policy submits review report to EDB

(with photo)

The Task Force on School-based Management (SBM) Policy today (July 8) submitted its review report to the Education Bureau (EDB).

The Chairman of the Task Force, Mr Tim Lui, said, "Since its establishment in November 2017, the Task Force has looked into the current implementation of the SBM policy in aided schools and related issues carefully. During the review process, the Task Force had launched an extensive consultation to collect views from the education sector and stakeholders for formulating the final recommendations."

He added that the Task Force had considered all the views collected and hoped that with the joint efforts of the Government and the education sector, the recommendations of the Task Force will be fully carried out to achieve greater effectiveness in implementing the SBM policy, thereby fostering the provision of quality education that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

The Task Force set up under the Education Commission (EC) has put forward a total of 27 recommendations with a view to improving the quality of governance, strengthening the administration capabilities of schools and unleashing capacity for teachers and principals, and enhancing the participation of major stakeholders in school governance. These include, among others, the provision of additional resources to strengthen administrative support of schools and management committees, streamlining of school administration, enhancement of training and support for school managers, proposal of soft training indicators for school supervisors and managers, and strengthening of communication between the EDB/Incorporated Management Committees and stakeholders. Despite the fact that complaint handling lies beyond the scope of the SBM policy, the Task Force, in view of the extensive discussion and concerns of the sector about handling of teachers' complaints in early 2019, deemed it necessary to deliberate on this issue and make recommendations for improvement in a bid to further enhance the fairness, impartiality and acceptance of the complaint handling mechanism. The recommendations are set out in the Annex.

Having received the review report, the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung said, "I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to the Chairman and members of the Task Force for their hard work and contributions to the review. The Task Force has been dedicated to conducting a thorough and in-depth review on SBM and various key issues with professional insight and wide engagement of stakeholders, before making the pragmatic and constructive recommendations.

"The EDB attaches great importance to the effective implementation of SBM. We have earlier adopted the Task Force's preliminary views and announced that as from the 2019/20 school year, all public sector schools (including special schools) and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme would be

provided with additional resources of \$570 million each year to strengthen the administrative support for schools and their management committees, including the implementation of the 'One Executive Officer for Each School' policy. The EDB will further study the review report and consider the recommendations in detail for mapping out the way forward."

The full review report can be viewed on the EC website at www.e-c.edu.hk/en/publications_and_related_documents/education_reports.html.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, July 8, 2019 is 105.4 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, July 6, 2019 is 105.4 (up 0.2 against last Friday's index).

Music Office's Instrumental Music Training Scheme invites applications from beginners

The Instrumental Music Training Scheme, organised by the Music Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, is now recruiting beginners for its 2019-20 Elementary Year 1 courses. The scheme seeks to encourage children and youths to develop their talent and interest in music through a systematic training programme during leisure time. The deadline for applications is August 7.

The scheme provides training in almost 30 Chinese and Western musical instruments including the violin, viola, cello, double bass, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, French horn, trombone, suona, sheng, dizi, erhu, pipa, zhongruan and others, with supplementary training in musicianship and theory. Children and the youth aged 6 to 14 with no instrumental experience are welcome to apply.

One-hour group lessons are conducted weekly in Cantonese at one of the Music Office's music centres located in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Mong Kok, Sha Tin and Tsuen Wan. Annual tuition fees of \$1,764 for the first year and \$2,156 for the second year are payable in four instalments. Fee remission scheme is available for trainees in need of financial assistance.

Course pamphlets and application forms are now available at all Music Office music's centres. Online applications are also available at www.lcsd.gov.hk/musicoffice. Applicants who meet the age requirement will be invited to attend a music aptitude test and an interview on August 25 and notified of the results by October. The training will commence in early November.

For enquiries, please call the Music Office's music centres at 2802 0657 (Wan Chai), 2796 2893 (Kwun Tong), 2399 2200 (Mong Kok), 2158 6462 (Sha Tin) and 2417 6429 (Tsuen Wan).