

Company director sentenced to suspended imprisonment for default of wages and payment in lieu of notice

A director of Tsang's Engineering (Hong Kong) Limited was prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay employees wages and payment in lieu of notice under the Employment Ordinance (EO). The director pleaded guilty at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts on June 17 and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment suspended for 18 months today (July 2).

The company failed to pay wages to two employees and payment in lieu of notice to one employee, totalling about \$106,000, within seven days after the expiry of wage period or the date of termination of employment. The director concerned was prosecuted and convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences.

"The judgment would disseminate a strong message to all directors and responsible officers of bodies corporate that they have personal liability to ensure payment of wages and payment in lieu of notice to employees within the time limit in accordance with the EO. The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," a spokesman for the LD said.

Update on cluster of Adenovirus cases in Caritas Medical Centre

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients in Developmental Disabilities Unit of Caritas Medical Centre infected with Adenovirus, the spokesperson for Caritas Medical Centre made the following update today (July 2):

One more 2-year-old girl of the unit has presented with fever. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patient and the test results were positive for Adenovirus. The patient is being treated under isolation, with stable condition.

The hospital has informed the relatives of the patient about the situation. Infection control measures of the ward have been enhanced. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 2) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From June 23 to 29, two community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 74 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Block 4, Broadview Court, 11 Shum Wan Road, Southern District; and
2. A male patient, aged 53 with underlying illnesses, who lives in San Po Kong Mansion, 84-114 Choi Hung Road, Wong Tai Sin District.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of June 29, 47 LD cases had been reported in 2019. In 2018 and 2017, there were 105 and 72 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth

rinsing;

- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Provisional statistics of retail sales for May 2019

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (July 2).

The value of total retail sales in May 2019, provisionally estimated at \$40.0 billion, decreased by 1.3% compared with the same month in 2018. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in April 2019 decreased by 4.5% compared with a year earlier. For the first five months of 2019 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales decreased by 1.8% compared with the same period in 2018.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in May 2019 decreased by 1.7% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in April 2019 decreased by 5.0% compared with a year earlier. For the first five months of 2019 taken together, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 2.2% in volume compared with the same period in 2018.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing May 2019 with May 2018, the value of sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts decreased by 2.7%. This was followed by sales of commodities in supermarkets (-0.8% in value); wearing apparel (-4.6%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods, not elsewhere classified (-14.8%); motor vehicles and parts (-0.1%); fuels (-5.2%); furniture and fixtures (-1.3%); and optical shops (-11.3%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of commodities in department stores increased by 0.3% in May 2019 over a year earlier. This was followed by sales of medicines and cosmetics (+1.0% in value); other consumer goods, not elsewhere classified (+8.5%); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (+3.1%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (+1.6%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+0.1%); and Chinese drugs and herbs (+0.7%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales increased by 0.8% in the three months ending May 2019 over the preceding three-month period, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales increased by 0.5%.

These retail sales statistics measure the sales receipts in respect of goods sold by local retail establishments and are primarily intended for gauging the short-term business performance of the local retail sector. Data on retail sales are collected from local retail establishments through the

Monthly Survey of Retail Sales (MRS). Local retail establishments with and without physical shops are covered in MRS and their sales, both through conventional shops and online channels, are included in the retail sales statistics.

The retail sales statistics cover consumer spending on goods but not on services (such as those on housing, catering, medical care and health services, transport and communication, financial services, education and entertainment) which account for over 50% of the overall consumer spending. Moreover, they include spending on goods in Hong Kong by visitors but exclude spending outside Hong Kong by Hong Kong residents. Hence they should not be regarded as indicators for measuring overall consumer spending.

Users interested in the trend of overall consumer spending should refer to the data series of private consumption expenditure (PCE), which is a major component of the Gross Domestic Product published at quarterly intervals. Compiled from a wide range of data sources, PCE covers consumer spending on both goods (including goods purchased from all channels) and services by Hong Kong residents whether locally or abroad. Please refer to the C&SD publication "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly)" for more details.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that retail sales registered a narrower decline in May, partly due to the late arrival of the Labour Day holidays in the Mainland this year, which had led to a visibly larger year-on-year rise in visitor arrivals in May. Overall, the performance of retail sales remained subdued in recent months.

The spokesman pointed out further that in the near term, the outlook for retail sales will likely be clouded by the still-cautious consumption sentiment amid an uncertain global economic environment. Nevertheless, the sustained expansion in inbound tourism and the largely stable local labour market should continue to provide some support. The Government will closely monitor the situation.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures on value index and value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for April 2019 as well as the provisional figures for May 2019. The provisional figures on the value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet as well as the corresponding year-on-year changes for the first five months of 2019 taken together are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for April 2019 as well as the provisional figures for May 2019. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first five months of 2019 taken together are also shown.

Table 3 shows the movements of the value and volume of total retail sales in terms of the year-on-year rate of change for a month compared with

the same month in the preceding year based on the original series, and in terms of the rate of change for a three-month period compared with the preceding three-month period based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The classification of retail establishments follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080003).

Alternatively, the historical series of retail sales statistics can be downloaded in the form of a statistical table at the website of the C&SD

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=D5600089).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7400; email: mrs@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected counterfeit goods \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 2 000 items of suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$480,000 at Man Kam To Control Point on June 27.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers intercepted an incoming truck at Man Kam To Control Point on June 27. The batch of suspected counterfeit goods, including watches, chargers, sunglasses and shoes, was found inside the cargo compartment of the vehicle. A 58-year-old male driver was arrested.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who imports or exports any goods to which a forged trademark is applied commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

