

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on October 21 to noon today (October 22), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 272 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 94 578 samples of food imported from Japan (including 60 228 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 21 158 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

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sea salt) and 21 158 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Public rental housing applicant sentenced to imprisonment for making false statement

A public rental housing (PRH) tenant was sentenced to a total of 30 days' imprisonment for not declaring Hong Kong domestic property ownership in the PRH application, contrary to the Housing Ordinance. The PRH unit concerned has been recovered.

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (October 22) reminded PRH residents and applicants to truthfully declare their income and assets.

The PRH tenant did not declare her ownership of domestic property in Hong Kong in two declaration forms submitted to the HD in 2018 and 2019 for PRH application, and thereby succeeded in obtaining a PRH unit in Shek Mun Estate. Subsequent investigation revealed that she owned a domestic property in Yuen Long and she would not be eligible for PRH application.

The tenant was prosecuted by the HD for knowingly making a false statement in respect of her PRH application, contrary to Section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance. She was convicted in the Shatin Magistrates' Courts earlier and was adjourned for sentence yesterday. Having considered the gravity of the offence and the precious PRH resources involved, the presiding magistrate considered that it was not suitable to make a community service order. She was sentenced to 20 days' imprisonment for each of the two summonses, with 10 days to be run concurrently. Thus, she was sentenced to a total of 30 days' imprisonment. Additionally, the HD recovered the PRH unit in May this year.

The spokesman reminded all PRH applicants that if they were convicted by the court for making false statement knowingly during PRH application, contrary to Section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. The PRH application concerned will be cancelled, while any allocated PRH unit will be recovered by the HD.

The spokesman reiterated that, in general, the public recognises the HD's efforts in combating the abuse of public housing resources. The HD will continue to adopt multipronged and risk-based measures to comprehensively combat the abuse of PRH.

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14 building plans approved in August

The Buildings Department approved 14 building plans in August, with four on Hong Kong Island, six in Kowloon and four in the New Territories.

Of the approved plans, eight were for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, two were for commercial developments, and four were for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for works to start on 10 building projects which, when completed, will provide 64 505 square metres of gross floor area for domestic use involving 1 502 units, and 38 346 sq m of gross floor area for non-domestic use. The department has received notification of commencement of superstructure works for three building projects.

The department also issued 15 occupation permits, with two on Hong Kong Island, five in Kowloon and eight in the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation, the gross floor area for domestic use was 69 576 sq m involving 2 319 units, and 18 417 sq m was for non-domestic use.

The declared cost of new buildings completed in August totalled about \$3.3 billion.

In addition, four demolition consents were issued.

The department received 2 409 reports about unauthorised building works (UBWs) in August and issued 702 removal orders on UBWs.

The full version of the Monthly Digest for August can be viewed on the Buildings Department's homepage (www.bd.gov.hk).