

SWD urges public to be alert to fraudulent website

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (October 7) alerted members of the public to a fraudulent website, which purports to be the website of the SWD (subsidy-swd-gov-hk[.]web[.]app).

The fraudulent website seeks to obtain the personal and credit card information of the members of the public. The SWD emphasises that the website has no connection with the department and has referred the case to the Police for follow-up.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned should contact the Police. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255.

LCSD's one-stop performing arts web portal launched today

Today (October 7), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) launched a new one-stop web portal that allows members of the public to easily and conveniently search for performing arts programmes presented or sponsored by the LCSD and information about its venues.

The portal features a user-centric design. The scrolling banner at the top clearly shows the latest programme highlights. There is also an event calendar. Users can search for programmes not only by date but also by programme type, such as stage performance, festival, family entertainment, film, exhibition, workshop, and online programme. Another search method is by art form, namely music, Chinese opera, dance, theatre, Multi-Arts, and pop concerts. Users can easily browse and select the programmes they prefer.

Additionally, users can search for programmes by date, venue or other keywords according to their own preferences and needs. Hyperlinks are available on the programme information page to direct users to URBIX or other ticketing platforms for instant purchase or more ticketing details. All of this can be done in just a few clicks.

Apart from performing arts programmes, the one-stop portal also provides basic information about all 16 performance venues under the LCSD. Anyone interested in hiring venue facilities can visit the e-APS (LCSD Performance Venues e-Application and Payment Services), through which they can make

bookings and pay rental fees online.

The portal will introduce additional functions later, such as subscriptions for a monthly e-calendar and e-enrolment for activities like talks and workshops, to further elevate its services.

The LCSD's one-stop performing arts web portal www.performing-arts.gov.hk is now available for public access.

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Adaptation period for new regulation on disposable plastic products to end in two weeks

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesperson said today (October 7) that the six-month adaptation period for the new regulation on disposable plastic products will conclude in two weeks, on October 21.

The EPD reminds all relevant businesses to prepare for the end of the adaptation period. For information on non-plastic alternatives, please visit the EPD's Green Tableware Platform (www.greentableware.hk) or contact the EPD hotline at 2838 3111.

During the past five months of the adaptation period, the new regulation has successfully initiated a trend of waste reduction across various sectors. The catering sector has reported that many takeaway customers have gradually adapted to bringing their own reusable cutlery. Chained restaurants have indicated that approximately 80 per cent of their customers have chosen not to require takeaway cutlery, and about 30 per cent of restaurants no longer provide any takeaway cutlery.

In the retail and services sectors, property management companies have revealed that most people have become accustomed to using umbrella dryers instead of single-use plastic umbrella bags. The use of disposable plastic products, such as plastic balloon sticks, glow sticks, and party hats during festivals, has significantly decreased, with businesses co-operating by switching to selling alternative products.

The hotel sector has reported that the consumption of disposable plastic items since the implementation of the new regulation has been reduced substantially. Many visitors have also expressed support for the new plastic-free measures. The implementation of the new regulation has encouraged habitual changes among both the public and the trades, fostering a new culture of "plastic-free, disposable-free, and green-recycling" at the community level and paving the way towards a new milestone in plastic-free living.

Plastic is widely used and deeply integrated into human life. However, due to its harm to the environment, there is now an international consensus: to achieve sustainable development, humanity must take action to reduce and ultimately eliminate plastic in the long term.

Hong Kong has implemented the new regulation since April 22 this year, aiming to reduce the use of disposable plastic tableware and other disposable plastic products at the source. This initiative seeks to mitigate the impact

of plastic pollution on marine ecology and human health, accompanied by publicity and education, with a view to establishing a habit and culture of being plastic-free in society.

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 4 to noon today (October 7), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 330 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). 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 150 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 90 318 samples of food imported from Japan (including 57 638 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 20 406 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.