

Results of monthly survey on business situation of small and medium-sized enterprises for August 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (September 10) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for August 2024.

The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs decreased from 41.8 in July 2024 in the contractionary zone to 41.3 in August 2024, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. September 2024) outlook DI on business receipts was 45.4. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for some surveyed sectors dropped in August 2024 as compared with previous month, particularly for the logistics (from 40.3 to 35.9) and import and export trades (from 45.1 to 42.3). On the other hand, the current DIs on business receipts for the restaurants, retail trade, and business services increased in August 2024 as compared with previous month.

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades decreased from 44.8 in July 2024 to 43.4 in August 2024, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. September 2024) was 46.4.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that overall business sentiment among SMEs weakened slightly in August, while the situation for different sectors varied. Yet, the overall expectations on the business situation in one month's time remained stable. The overall employment situation saw some improvement.

The spokesman added that while business sentiment would continue to be affected by various uncertainties in the external environment, the Central Government's various measures benefitting Hong Kong and continued growth of the local economy should provide support. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

Further information

The Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises aims to provide a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for assessing the short-term business situation faced by SMEs. SMEs covered in this survey refer to establishments with fewer than 50 persons engaged. Respondents were asked to exclude seasonal fluctuations in reporting their views. Based on the views collected from the survey, a set of diffusion indices (including current and outlook diffusion indices) is compiled. A reading above 50 indicates that the business condition is generally favourable, whereas that below 50 indicates otherwise. As for statistics on

the business prospects of prominent establishments in Hong Kong, users may refer to the publication entitled "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey" released by the C&SD.

The results of the survey should be interpreted with care. The survey solicits feedback from a panel sample of about 600 SMEs each month and the survey findings are thus subject to sample size constraint. Views collected from the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in. Besides, in this type of opinion survey on expected business situation, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the business situation accords with the underlying trends. For this survey, main bulk of the data were collected around the last week of the reference month.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey on the Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". Users can browse and download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080015&scode=300).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7246; email: sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Hong Kong Customs alerts public to unsafe light clay toy \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (September 10) reminded members of the public to stay alert to an unsafe light clay toy. Test results indicated that the plastic sheets wrapping the toy could pose a suffocation risk to children. To avoid an accident, parents should immediately stop letting their children from playing with the light clay toys. Traders should also remove the light clay toys from their shelves.

Customs officers earlier test-purchased various models of clay toys from retailers in different districts for safety testing. Test results revealed that the thickness of the plastic sheets of one model of light clay toy was less than 0.038 millimetres and children could suffocate if they covered their faces with the plastic sheets.

Customs later conducted an operation and seized a total of 184 suspected unsafe light clay toys of the same model from the related retailer and wholesaler. Prohibition notices were served at the same time to stop their continued sale and supply of the unsafe light clay toy.

The investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds members of the public to observe the following safety tips when purchasing and playing with toys:

- Beware of whether the toys contain any small parts. Small parts may block a child's throat and lead to suffocation if swallowed;
- Check the structure of the toys to see, for example, whether they have a fragile structure, hidden sharp points, rough surfaces, sharp edges or gaps that may pinch children's fingers;
- Do not let children play with toys alone;
- Pay attention to age recommendations shown on labels;
- Pay attention to and follow the instructions associated with the toys;
- Throw away plastic packaging materials of toys to avoid children being suffocated; and
- Stop children from playing with the toys immediately if any damage is observed.

Customs is committed to the protection of consumer interests and regularly conducts spot checks and safety tests on toys and children's products to ensure that they are reasonably safe for use by consumers.

Under the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance, it is an offence to supply, manufacture or import unsafe toys or children's products. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on a subsequent conviction.

Members of the public may report information relating to suspected unsafe toys or children's products via Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).



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 September 9 to noon today (September 10), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 192 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 82 822 samples of food imported from Japan (including 53 051 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and

sea salt) and 19 054 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 is 104 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

SCST to visit Beijing

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, will depart for Beijing tomorrow morning (September 11). He will attend the 2024 World Conference on Tourism Cooperation and Development on September 12 and witness the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) on co-hosting the WTCF's annual summit in 2025.

During his stay in Beijing, Mr Yeung will also call on the General Administration of Sport of China.

Mr Yeung will depart Beijing for Hong Kong on September 13. During his absence, the Under Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, will be the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism.