

## Company and its director fined \$92,500 for contravening Employment Ordinance

Niron Technology Limited and its director were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for violation of the requirements under the Employment Ordinance (EO). The company and its director pleaded guilty at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (July 29) and were fined a total sum of \$92,500. The company and its director were also ordered to pay employees an outstanding sum of about \$630,000.

The company wilfully and without reasonable excuse contravened the requirement of the EO, failing to pay eight employees' wages and payment in lieu of notice within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods and termination of employment contract, and also failing to pay the annual leave payment to one employee within the statutory time limit, with the total outstanding payment being about \$630,000. The director concerned was prosecuted and convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above wage offences committed by the company.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the statutory time limit stipulated in the EO," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

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## Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 29) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From July 21 to 27, the CHP recorded three community-acquired LD cases:

1. A female patient, aged 85 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Eastern District;

2. A male patient, aged 69 with good past health, who lives in Wong Tai Sin District; and
3. A male patient, aged 91 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Kwai Tsing 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 July 27, 59 LD cases had been recorded this year. In 2023 and 2022, there were 121 and 80 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; 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 that support breathing. People may become 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; 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.

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â€‹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 ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) 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  $\mu\text{m}$  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.

â€‹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.

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## **Company and its responsible officer fined \$50,000 for contravening Employment Ordinance**

â€‹SP Digital Limited and its responsible officer were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for violation of the requirements under the Employment Ordinance (EO). The company and its responsible officer pleaded guilty at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (July 29) and were fined a total sum of \$50,000. The company and its responsible officer were also ordered to pay employees concerned an outstanding sum of about \$220,000.

The company wilfully and without reasonable excuse contravened the requirement of the EO, failing to pay three employees' wages and payment in lieu of notice within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods and

termination of employment contract, and also failing to pay the annual leave payment to two employees within the statutory time limit, with the total outstanding payment being about \$220,000. The responsible officer of company concerned was prosecuted and convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above wage offences committed by the company.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the statutory time limit stipulated in the EO," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

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## Cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases at Kowloon Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

â€‹The spokesperson for the Kowloon Hospital (KH) made the following announcement today (July 29):

An 88-year-old male patient in an extended care ward of KH was confirmed to be infected with Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) on July 23. In accordance with the prevailing infection control guidelines, the hospital commenced a contact tracing investigation. Three more male patients (aged 75 to 99) from the same ward were confirmed to be VRE carriers and asymptomatic. One patient is currently hospitalised at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for other medical needs and one patient was discharged. The remaining two patients are being treated in isolation at the hospital and are in stable condition.

The ward concerned has adopted the following enhanced infection control measures:

1. enhanced hand hygiene and stringent contact precautions;
2. enhanced attention to contamination-prone procedures; and
3. enhanced disinfection and cleaning of the concerned ward.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow up.

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## Appeal for information on missing girl in Sham Shui Po (with photo)

Police today (July 29) appealed to the public for information on a girl who went missing in Sham Shui Po.

Cheng Hiu-tung, aged 12, went missing after she left her residence on Apliu Street on July 27 afternoon. Her family made a report to Police yesterday (July 28).

She is about 1.54 metres tall, 50 kilograms in weight and of fat build. She has a round face with yellow complexion and long black straight hair. She was last seen wearing a pink T-shirt, a black skirt and white sports shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing girl or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8036 or 9020 6542, or email to [rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.

