

Red fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

The fire danger situation today (February 22) is red and fire risk is extreme. The countryside is extremely vulnerable to fire. If you are planning to spend the day in the countryside, please take pre-cooked food for a picnic and take all measures to prevent hill fires. The penalty for lighting fires illegally in the countryside is \$25,000 and a year's imprisonment.

FEHD demands that school lunch box supplier ensure food safety

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) convened a meeting with the meal box supplier, Luncheon Star, again today (February 21) on the food quality issues of its lunch boxes and its follow-up work. A preliminary written report submitted by the supplier was also received.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "We attach great importance to the incident, and has been actively following up since early last week. From the meeting today and the preliminary written report submitted by the supplier, we noted that the supplier has increased manpower in response to the manpower shortage earlier and has implemented a series of measures to ensure food quality."

He said, "The FEHD staff inspected the food factories again yesterday and today, with no irregularities found during the inspections. In the coming days, we will arrange inspections to the food factories concerned every day to ensure that the relevant licensing conditions are observed and the hygienic standards stipulated in the laws are met. We will also check whether the supplier has duly implemented the improvement measures mentioned in the written report."

The spokesman reiterated that the supplier must fulfill its responsibility to ensure food quality. The department will seriously handle any violation of the relevant requirements.

The FEHD has so far received two suspected food poisoning outbreaks referred by the Centre for Health Protection, involving a total of four students who consumed the lunch boxes provided by the supplier on February 13 and 16 respectively. The department announced yesterday that the test results of the 11 food samples and 25 environmental swabs samples collected from the

food factories concerned during the investigations last week were all satisfactory.

Apart from the above-mentioned follow-up work on the quality of meal boxes of Luncheon Star, the FEHD also continues inspections to some 200 local licensed food factories endorsed to supply school lunch boxes, to remind operators of the proper way of handling school lunch boxes. The inspections will be completed within this week. Moreover, the department will organise an online talk to remind meal box suppliers that they should follow good hygienic practices during food preparation and develop a food safety plan based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system.

Arrangement for identity card replacement after the cessation of operation of the Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres

The Immigration Department (ImmD) announced today (February 21) that, starting from March 6, 2023, working hours of the Registration of Persons Offices (ROP Offices) – Hong Kong Office, Kowloon Office, Kwun Tong Office and Tuen Mun Office will be extended for processing applications for replacement of new smart identity cards made after the end of the Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise (Replacement Exercise).

An ImmD spokesperson said, the Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres (SIDCCs) (see Annex I) will cease to operate starting from March 4, 2023. With a view to enabling residents who have yet to replace their new smart identity cards in a continuous and orderly manner, starting from March 6, 2023, working hours of the four ROP Offices mentioned above will be extended. For details, please see Annex II. The spokesperson added, working hours of ROP Offices – Yuen Long Office and Fo Tan Office, will remain unchanged at this stage and will not process applications under the Replacement Exercise.

Eligible members of the public who have yet to replace for a new smart identity card on or before March 3, 2023, may, starting from March 4, 2023, make appointment for identity card replacement at the four ROP Offices mentioned above with extended service hours for the next 24 working days from March 6, 2023.

Members of the public may scan the QR codes (see Annex III) to download the ImmD mobile application or make an appointment for identity card application via the Internet (www.gov.hk/icbooking). The ImmD appeals to the applicants to pre-fill the application form when making appointments through

the mobile application or the Internet for faster procedures. In order to ensure residents could apply for identity cards in a smooth and orderly manner, ROP Offices will not process applications without appointments.

In addition, those who have made an application at an SIDCC but yet to collect their new smart identity cards are required to collect their identity cards at a specified ROP Office starting from March 6, 2023. For details, please see Annex IV.

Hong Kong residents who cannot have their identity cards replaced due to their absence from Hong Kong can apply for a replacement at a ROP office within 30 days upon their future return to Hong Kong and need not rush back to replace their identity card, whether the replacement or issuance is required under the Replacement Exercise or due to the reaching of 11 or 18 years of age. If they return to Hong Kong and stay in Hong Kong for less than 30 days, they will not violate the law for not having their identity cards replaced during that time.

At present, the old form of smart identity cards are still valid. The ImmD will continue to closely monitor the progress of the replacement of new smart identity cards and has no plan to make arrangement for declaring any identity card invalid at this stage.

On the other hand, the On-site Identity Card Replacement Service would not be affected by the cessation of operation at SIDCCs. Immigration officers will continue to visit eligible residential care homes to provide on-site identity card replacement and new smart identity card delivery service for all eligible residents at residential care homes who have yet to replace their identity cards.

For details of the Replacement Exercise and the relevant arrangement after its end, please visit the website www.smartid.gov.hk or call the ImmD's enquiry hotline at 2824 6111.

Statement by Hospital Authority on recent surgical light incident

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

â€‹The spokesperson for the Hospital Authority (HA) made the following statement regarding the recent surgical light incident:

According to the record of the HA, the manufacturer and maintenance vendor involved did not report to the HA that a missing screw incident of one of the surgical lights had been reported to the United States Food and Drug

Administration.

The HA reiterates the safety of patients and staff is its prime concern. It regrets that the vendor did not report the related incident of the product or disclose the potential risk to the HA, which exposed healthcare workers and patients to the risks.

Preliminary information shows that the HA has purchased one surgical light of the same model as that in the above-mentioned incident, which was confirmed to be safe after inspection and can continue to be used. This model of surgical light is not used in United Christian Hospital.

After the incident of falling surgical light on Saturday (February 18), the HA has urged and followed up closely with the vendor concerned, and commissioned an independent engineering expert on incident analysis, Dr Eric Lim, to investigate and to understand the cause of the incident.

The HA will continue to follow up the incident seriously, and has ordered the vendor to continue to inspect the surgical lights in public hospitals and submit a report on the incident, and to make appropriate and effective follow-up to prevent similar incidents from happening again. The HA reserves rights to pursue relevant responsibilities against the vendor.

Five persons sentenced for violating anti-epidemic regulations

Five persons were sentenced by the Magistrates' Courts today (February 21) for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) or the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C).

The first four cases involved four men aged 18, 59, 45 and 28 who were earlier issued with compulsory quarantine orders. Before the expiry of the quarantine orders, the 18-year-old man and the 59-year-old man breached their quarantine orders on July 31 last year. Both of them were each charged with contravening sections 32(1) and (3) of Cap. 599A and were each fined \$8,000 by the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts. The 45-year-old man breached his quarantine order on July 11 last year and was charged with contravening sections 22(5) and (6) of Cap. 599A and was sentenced to imprisonment for seven days, suspended for 12 months by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts. The 28 year-old man breached his quarantine order on July 6 last year and was charged with contravening sections 8(4) and (5) of Cap. 599C and was sentenced to imprisonment for seven days, suspended for 12 months by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts.

The fifth case involved a 56-year-old woman. She earlier tested positive

for COVID-19 and was issued with an isolation order. Before the end of the isolation period, she left the place of isolation on November 6 last year. She was charged with contravening sections 32(1) and (3) of Cap. 599A and was sentenced to imprisonment for seven days, suspended for 12 months by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that co-operation and support by members of the public play a critical role in anti-epidemic work. They must strictly observe relevant requirements in order to fight the pandemic and minimise the risk of transmission in the community. The spokesman reiterated that resolute action will be taken against anyone who breaches the relevant regulations.