

## [Metal scrap recycling site in Lau Fau Shan, Yuen Long, convicted for dust emissions causing nuisance](#)

A metal scrap recycling site in Lau Fau Shan, Yuen Long, failed to abide by statutory notices of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to cover or enclose metal material storage piles to prevent dust emission, and failed to prevent dust, grit or particles emissions when operating the plant or equipment, causing an environmental nuisance to nearby residents. The recycling site was convicted at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (May 3) of three violations of the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) and was fined \$33,000. The director of the recycling site was also fined \$22,000 for consenting or conniving to commit the offence.

During an inspection last July, EPD enforcement officers found that the recycling site had not properly covered or enclosed the metal stock to prevent dust emissions, which might affect pedestrians and nearby residents. A statutory notice was issued under the APCO requesting the recycling site to take remedial measures. Upon three inspections after the deadline as stipulated in the statutory notice, the department found that the recycling site failed to adopt improvement measures and thus violated the requirement of the notice. The EPD then initiated prosecution against the recycling site and its director for three violations against the statutory notice requirements.

The EPD's recent inspections revealed that the recycling site had properly covered or enclosed the metal stock, and there was no further violation of statutory notices.

An EPD spokesman reminded operators of metal recycling sites to properly cover or enclose metal material storage piles to prevent dust emissions, and take effective measures such as well-equipped automatic sprinkler systems to prevent dust emissions. Upon receipt of a statutory notice issued by the EPD, operators must comply with the notice requirements to carry out relevant improvement works within the specified time.

According to the APCO, anyone who fails to comply with the statutory notice requirements commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 on first conviction. A maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on subsequent convictions.

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## **LegCo to continue Second Reading debate on Appropriation Bill 2022**

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting tomorrow (May 4) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, Members will continue the Second Reading debate on the Appropriation Bill 2022 and Government officials will speak on the Bill. If the Bill is supported by Members and receives its Second Reading, it will stand committed to the committee of the whole Council. After the committee of the whole Council has completed consideration of the Bill and its report is adopted by the Council, the Bill will be set down for the Third Reading.

Meanwhile, the Mainland Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (Reciprocal Enforcement) Bill will be introduced into the Council for the First Reading and the Second Reading. The Second Reading debate on the Bill will be adjourned.

Members will also ask the Government 22 questions on various policy areas, all of which require written replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

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## **Advance estimates on Gross Domestic Product for first quarter of 2022**

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 3) the advance estimates on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the first quarter of 2022.

According to the advance estimates, GDP decreased by 4.0% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022 from a year earlier, compared with the increase of 4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2021. The decline of GDP was attributable to the weak performance in both domestic and external demand.

Analysed by major GDP component, private consumption expenditure decreased by 5.4% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022 from a year

earlier, as against the 5.3% increase in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Government consumption expenditure measured in national accounts terms grew by 5.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022 over a year earlier, after the increase of 4.1% in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Gross domestic fixed capital formation decreased by 8.3% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022 from a year earlier, deteriorating from the decrease of 0.6% in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Over the same period, total exports of goods measured in national accounts terms recorded a decline of 4.5% in real terms from a year earlier, as against the 13.5% increase in the fourth quarter of 2021. Imports of goods measured in national accounts terms decreased by 5.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022, after the increase of 9.9% in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Exports of services fell by 2.8% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022 from a year earlier, compared with the increase of 6.9% in the fourth quarter of 2021. Imports of services decreased by 2.8% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022, as against the 4.5% increase in the fourth quarter of 2021.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison basis, GDP decreased by 2.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2022 when compared with the fourth quarter of 2021.

#### Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the Hong Kong economy faced immense pressure in the first quarter of 2022. Externally, moderating global demand growth and epidemic-induced cross boundary transportation disruptions posed substantial drags to exports. Domestically, a wide range of economic activities as well as economic sentiment were hard hit by the fifth wave of local epidemic and resultant anti-epidemic measures. According to the advance estimates, real GDP contracted by 4.0% in the first quarter of 2022 from a year earlier, ending the streak of year-on-year growth in the previous four quarters. On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter basis, real GDP fell by 2.9%, having shown little change in the preceding quarter.

Analysed by major expenditure component, total exports of goods fell. Exports of services also contracted. Domestically, private consumption expenditure turned to a decline while overall investment expenditure saw an enlarged dip.

Looking ahead, the global economy will continue to face significant challenges in the near term. Rampant inflation has seen major central banks expedite their monetary policy tightening, weighing on the economic outlook. Furthermore, tensions in Ukraine will likely keep international energy and commodity prices high, aggravate supply chain disruptions and dampen economic sentiment. The evolving global pandemic and development of China-US relations will continue to pose uncertainty.

Nonetheless, thanks to the support from the Central Government and concerted effort of the community, the local epidemic has been receding since early March, allowing for the gradual relaxation of social distancing measures. This, together with the Government's various support measures, should help the revival of domestic demand in the remainder of the year. The improving local epidemic situation should also be conducive to the alleviation of cross-boundary transportation disruptions and hence recovery of trading activities. It is thus essential for the community to keep working in unison with the Government to put the local epidemic under control.

The revised figures on GDP and more detailed statistics for the first quarter of 2022, as well as the revised GDP forecast for 2022, will be released on May 13, 2022.

Further information

The year-on-year percentage changes of GDP and selected major expenditure components in real terms from the first quarter of 2021 to the first quarter of 2022 are shown in Table 1.

When more data become available, the C&SD will compile revised figures on GDP. The revised figures on GDP and more detailed statistics for the first quarter of 2022 will be released at the C&SD website ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode250.html](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode250.html)) and the Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly) Report ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1030001&scode=250](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1030001&scode=250)) on May 13, 2022.

For enquiries about statistics on GDP by expenditure component, please contact the National Income Branch (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5077 or email: [gdp-e@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:gdp-e@censtatd.gov.hk)).

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## **SWD announces incident concerning misdelivered cheques for relief grants**

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (May 3) announced an incident concerning misdellivered cheques for relief grants.

The SWD has earlier rolled out the Scheme on Relief Grants for Interest Class Instructors Hired by Organisations Subvented by the Social Welfare Department (Phase 4). The scheme aims at providing a one-off relief grant of \$5,000 to eligible interest class instructors engaged/planned to be engaged by subvented welfare service units of the SWD-subvented organisations for providing training in arts, dancing, handicraft work, sports, etc, for service users during the first quarter of 2022, where the units' services have been suspended and the instructors' income affected owing to the

epidemic situation, so as to help lessen the impact of COVID-19 on the instructors concerned.

The SWD has been gradually delivering crossed cheques to eligible instructors by mail. During the process, the SWD found that 354 cheques sent out in late April were delivered to wrong addresses. Some instructors therefore have not received any cheques or have received the cheques of the others.

After an initial investigation, the SWD found that the incident was caused by errors made by its officers during data input and verification. The SWD has expressed an apology to 350 affected instructors whom it had successfully reached by phone so far. It has also approached the bank concerned to void all the 354 cheques. No monetary loss has been caused to the Government.

The cheques which had been sent out by mail carried the names of the eligible instructors only, without any other personal data. The SWD has reported the incident to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data.

The SWD expressed an apology to the instructors affected. It will conduct a comprehensive review on the workflow and arrange the cheques to be resent to the instructors by mail as soon as possible. For enquiries, members of the public may call 2892 5126 or 2892 5121.

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## **Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Ming Toa House, Ming Tak Estate, Tseung Kwan O**

â€‹The Government today (May 3) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 4pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tseung Kwan O (i.e. Ming Toa House, Ming Tak Estate, Tseung Kwan O, excluding Ming Tak Estate Property Service Management Office and social service unit thereat, see Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The

Government aims at finishing this exercise at around noon tomorrow (May 4). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 9pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past three months, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, will not be required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around noon tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from April 27 to May 3, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before May 5, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

For the 2022 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) candidates

who are within the "restricted area" and need to sit the HKDSE examination on the following day, or examination personnel who need to take up invigilation duties for HKDSE on the following day, the Government appeals to them to go to the temporary specimen collection stations setup within the "restricted area" before 8pm today and present to the prescribed officer the relevant documents (including the identification documents and HKDSE admission forms, or a certification letter issued by the school of the examination personnel) proving their identities. These HKDSE candidates and examination personnel will be given priority testing with a view to enabling them to obtain test results on the following day as early as possible. The priority testing arrangement also applies to the family members who live together with these HKDSE candidates and examination personnel, so as to identify those HKDSE candidates and examination personnel who have become close contacts of confirmed cases for making quarantine arrangement.

If any HKDSE candidate or examination personnel needs to leave the "restricted area" for the examination centre before the declaration is revoked, he/she can make a request to the prescribed officers within the "restricted area". The prescribed officer may allow the candidate or the examination personnel to leave the "restricted area" after verifying his/her testing result(s) and recording the relevant information. For the safety of all candidates and examination personnel, only those candidates and examination personnel who have obtained negative test results will be allowed to enter the examination hall. For details, please read the relevant information issued by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority earlier

[www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/PPT\\_2022DSE\\_compulsory\\_testing\\_arrangements\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/PPT_2022DSE_compulsory_testing_arrangements_eng.pdf).

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 9637 1162) which started operation at 4pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.