

## **EPD convictions in March**

Forty-two convictions were recorded in March 2021 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department.

Two of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, one was under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance, one was under the Noise Control Ordinance, 23 were under the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation, one was under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance, 13 were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance and one was under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

A company was fined \$16,000, which was the heaviest fine in March, for importing controlled waste without a permit.

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## **CHP investigates 12 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, April 19, the CHP was investigating 12 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 696 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 695 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, 11 are imported cases and one is epidemiologically linked with a local case.

The CHP said that one confirmed case announced today who was epidemiologically linked with a local case (case number: 11696) resided on 8th Floor in Block 2, Oi Fai House, Yau Oi Estate in Tuen Mun. This additional case resided in an adjacent unit to a previously confirmed case (case number: 11645) on the same floor. The CHP is proactively following up to investigate whether the infections of the cases are related, so as to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus.

Given environmental contamination on the same floor of the building cannot be excluded, the CHP decided to carry out a prudent measures on infection control. The DH will issue quarantine orders to all remaining asymptomatic residents on 8th Floor of Block 2, Oi Fai House in Yau Oi Estate and transfer them to quarantine centres while symptomatic residents will be sent to the hospital for treatment.

Separately, the CHP is continuing its investigation on a confirmed case

who was epidemiologically linked with a local case announced yesterday (April 18). The 31-year-old woman was a clinic staff member working at a clinic located at The Centrium, 60 Wyndham Street, Central. The CHP has arranged the close contacts of the case, including clinic staff members and patients, to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre(s). The building has been included in the compulsory testing notice by the Government yesterday. Any person who had been present at The Centrium at any time during the period from March 29 to April 18, has to undergo testing by April 20, 2021. The CHP specifically appealed to anyone who had been present at the clinic to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette.

Meanwhile, regarding a preliminary positive case involving a kindergarten teacher announced by the CHP on April 17, her sample was tested by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the DH and the result was indeterminate. She has undergone further tests after admitted to a hospital and the result was negative. She was also tested negative for COVID-19 antibody. As such, the case will not be classified as a confirmed case at the moment.

A total of 175 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (April 5 to 18), including 37 local cases of which 12 are from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection

remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link [wa.me/85296171823?text=hi](https://wa.me/85296171823?text=hi), they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

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## US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender notice

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender notice:

Tender date	:	April 21, 2021 (Wednesday)
Tender submission time	:	9am to noon
Settlement date	:	April 22, 2021 (Thursday)
Repayment date	:	April 29, 2021 (Thursday)
Tenor	:	Seven Days
Amount on offer	:	US\$10,000 Million

Note: Licensed Banks interested in participating in the tender for the first time are encouraged to provide US dollar settlement instructions by email ([settlementsection@hkma.gov.hk](mailto:settlementsection@hkma.gov.hk)) to the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's Settlement Team in advance, preferably two days prior to the tender. Required information includes name of corresponding bank, name of final beneficiary (must be the Licensed Bank participating in the tender), and account or CHIPS number of a US dollar bank account to be settled in the US. Such information needs to be provided once only, unless there is further change.

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## Coin Collection Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (April 19) announces a new service schedule of the two "Coin Carts" under the Coin Collection Programme, for the period of May 24, 2021 up to August 1, 2021. The schedule and other details of the Programme are shown on the HKMA webpage

([coincollection.hkma.gov.hk](http://coincollection.hkma.gov.hk)).

Since the launch of the Programme in October 2014 up to March 31, 2021, the two Coin Carts had carried out 800 000 transactions, collecting 650 million coins with a total face value of HK\$967 million during the period. The collected coins are re-circulated to meet demand.

The Coin Carts provide service at locations that are convenient to the public without affecting the normal flow of traffic and pedestrians. Locations that have suitable power supply facilities, such as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department mobile library service locations, are preferred so as to reduce the need for using the Coin Carts' own stand-by generators. This makes the Programme more environmentally friendly. In selecting the service locations, the HKMA has taken into consideration comments and suggestions given by district councils and members of public; and has consulted the Transport Department and the Hong Kong Police Force as necessary.

The two Coin Carts collect coins from members of public in the 18 districts of Hong Kong on a rotating basis. Under normal circumstances each Coin Cart will stay at a location for a week, subject to availability of the parking space and the maintenance schedule of the Cart. Service hours are from 10am to 7pm. Each vehicle is equipped with two coin counting machines and operational staff will be present to provide assistance. An electrical wheelchair lift is available for use. Users can choose to exchange coins for banknotes or adding value to their stored value facilities, such as Octopus Cards or e-wallets (including AlipayHK, Octopus Wallet, Tap&Go, TNG Wallet and WeChat Pay). There is also a Community Chest donation box inside each vehicle. The coin collection service is free of charge.

The HKMA will review the Programme from time and time; and will regularly update the service schedule to give advance notice to the public.

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## [Illegal worker jailed](#)

A Vietnamese illegal worker holding a recognisance form was jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts on April 16.

During operation "Twilight" conducted on February 17, Immigration Department (ImmD) investigators raided a commercial building in Sheung Wan. A male Vietnamese, aged 37, was arrested while working as a cleaning worker. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant.

The illegal worker was charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts on April 16

with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. He pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. Meanwhile, he was also charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card and one count of being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card. He was sentenced to 15 months' and 12 months' imprisonment respectively for each count with parts of the sentences to run consecutively, making a total of 16 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. Under the prevailing laws, it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct an initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers who are arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.