

# Hong Kong Customs join forces with Police and DH to combat unlawful ginseng and dried seafood shop

Hong Kong Customs today (March 19) mounted a joint operation with the Police and the Department of Health (DH) codenamed "Iceglow" against unfair trade practices and fraud by a ginseng and dried seafood shop in Causeway Bay.

Customs earlier received information alleging that salespersons at a ginseng and dried seafood shop in Causeway Bay were suspected of engaging in misleading omission and imposing undue influence on customers to purchase Chinese medicine, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). Customs investigations revealed that the salespersons, in the course of sale of Chinese medicine, repeatedly avoided providing the unit price and total price of the goods with the intention of omitting and hiding the material information to the customers, causing the customers to purchase the Chinese medicine at exorbitant prices, which were 10 to 100 times different from what was expected. It was also found that the salespersons coerced the victims into purchasing the Chinese medicine by saying the Chinese medicine was ground.

Also, Police received information against the same ginseng and dried seafood shop that its salespersons were suspected of embezzling the customer's credit card for extra payment by fraud without the authorisation of the customer, in contravention of the Theft Ordinance (TO).

Customs then took joint operation with the Police and the DH today and a batch of suspected part I poison was found at the shop, in contravention of the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance. Two men, aged 36 and 42, suspected to be connected to the case were arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to purchase products from reputable shops. Consumers should also be cautious about the unit price and ask for more information, including the total price of the goods selected, before making a purchase decision.

Under the TDO, any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision, commits an offence. Also, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair a consumer's freedom of choice or conduct, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the TO, committing a fraudulent act is a criminal offence, and the offender may be liable to prosecution and imprisonment for up to 14 years.

According to the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products or Part 1 poisons are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

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## **Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today**

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened at an estate in Yuen Long this morning (March 19), in which a male worker while working on a ladder at the balcony of an upper floor unit of a building, dropped down from the ladder and fell over the railing of the balcony onto the ground floor. He was certified dead on the spot. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expresses its deepest sympathies to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending any work-above-ground activity in the unit. The contractors cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert

through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

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## [Government responds to testing arrangements for persons exempted from compulsory quarantine](#)

The Government noticed today (March 19) about the media reports on Government's move to update the "test-and-hold" arrangement at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) for persons exempted from compulsory quarantine by revising their designated holding locations with effect from tomorrow (March 20).

A Government spokesman pointed out that with effect from February 20, 2021, all persons who are exempted from compulsory quarantine have been subject to "test-and-hold" arrangement (i.e. undergo testing and wait for the result at HKIA or designated locations) when entering Hong Kong via the HKIA. Currently, Headland Hotel and Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel are two of the recognised designated holding locations.

The spokesman said that, in view of the shortened waiting time for test results at the HKIA and as a measure to further mitigate the risk of exempted persons' contact with other persons during the holding period, the Government will cancel the designation for Headland Hotel and Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel as designated holding locations with effect from tomorrow (March 20). In other words, all exempted persons (including air crew members) must wait

for their test results at the HKIA. The Department of Health has duly notified all the airlines of this arrangement through the Airline Operators' Committee of the HKIA.

The spokesman emphasised that the measure of revising the designated holding locations for the "test-and-hold" arrangement aims to avoid any chances for exempted persons from having unnecessary contacts with other persons before obtaining their negative test results, so as to minimise comprehensively the risk of community transmission brought about by importation of cases, particularly those carrying virus variants. The Government expressed gratitude to all sectors of the community (including the aviation industry) for their understanding and support, as well as their concerted efforts in fighting against the epidemic.

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## [\*\*SEN addresses European business community on opportunities arising from Hong Kong's carbon neutrality pledge \(with photo\)\*\*](#)

In light of Hong Kong's pledge to strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, today (March 19) discussed prospects for European technology in contributing to a greener and carbon-neutral Hong Kong during a webinar with more than 170 entrepreneurs and business executives from different European countries.

During the webinar, Mr Wong said that Hong Kong has been exploring various solutions to combat climate change, including seeking more zero-carbon energy, adopting energy-saving technologies, promoting the wider use of electric vehicles, and enhancing waste reduction and recycling such as optimising the development of advanced waste-to-energy/resources facilities to further turn waste into valuable resources. Noting that European technology has been playing a key role in establishing state-of-the-art waste-to-energy/resources facilities in Hong Kong, Mr Wong appealed to European enterprises to grasp the many business opportunities arising from Hong Kong's progressive targets set on carbon neutrality.

To demonstrate the active role of European technology in supporting Hong Kong's sustainable development, representatives from two European enterprises were invited to speak at the webinar to discuss their experiences in setting up two major waste management/recycling facilities in Hong Kong. One of the speakers, the General Manager of Keppel Seghers, Mr Ivan Christiaens, gave an insightful presentation on the project of designing, building and operating I-PARK, an integrated waste treatment facility in Hong Kong. The other

speaker, the Chief Executive Officer of ALBA Group plc & Co. KG, Dr Axel Schweitzer, spoke on how his company's advanced technology is being employed by WEEE·PARK, a waste electrical and electronic equipment treatment and recycling facility in Hong Kong.

The webinar entitled "European technology for a greener and carbon neutral Hong Kong – electric vehicles and waste management" was organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) in Brussels and the HKETO in Berlin, with support from the following 10 organisations:

- Austrian Federal Economic Chamber;
- Belgium-Hong Kong Society;
- Comité France Chine;
- European Waste Management Association;
- Federation of the German Waste, Water and Raw Materials Management Industry;
- MEDEF International;
- France Hong Kong Business Association;
- Italy-Hong Kong Association;
- Polish Alternative Fuels Association; and
- Netherlands Hong Kong Business Association.

The Chairman of the Belgium-Hong Kong Society, Mr Alexander De Beir, was the moderator of the webinar.



# Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Tseung Kwan O

The Government today (March 19) 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 8pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tseung Kwan O (i.e. Tower 9, La Splendeur, LOHAS Park, 1 Lohas Park Road, Tseung Kwan O; 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 area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 8am tomorrow (March 20), in order to achieve the goal of zero cases in the district with concerted efforts.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As there is a confirmed case recorded in Tower 9, La Splendeur, LOHAS Park, recently, as assessed, the risk of infection in the relevant area may be higher, 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 2am tomorrow. Persons subject to compulsory testing will be arranged to undergo nucleic acid testing 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 arrange door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

"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 at night after most people are released from work. 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 8am tomorrow with a view to allowing residents to leave their premises at around 8am. 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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from March 17 to 19, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, according to the compulsory testing notice issued today, any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from March 6 to 19, 2021, 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 March 21.

The Government has prepared simple food and cleaning supplies for the residents restricted by the declaration. The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which started operation at 8pm 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 hopes this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

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 \$5,000. 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 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.