

Safety monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines

With the implementation of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, the Department of Health (DH) is closely monitoring the potential adverse events after COVID-19 vaccinations by enhancing the existing passive surveillance and conducting active surveillance.

The Prevention and Control of Disease (Use of Vaccines) Regulation (Cap. 599K) (the Regulation) stipulates that it is necessary to put in place a mechanism for the monitoring of any adverse event occurring to the recipients associated with the administration of COVID-19 vaccines authorised for emergency use under the Government Vaccination Programme in Hong Kong.

Currently, the DH has established a pharmacovigilance system to receive and assess reports of adverse events following immunisations (AEFIs) submitted by healthcare professionals (for example, registered medical practitioners, nurses and pharmacists) and the pharmaceutical industry, in particular serious AEFIs, and conduct causality assessments to ascertain whether the adverse events were associated with the vaccinations.

For the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, apart from requiring the authorisation applicant to report local AEFIs, the DH will keep in view and refer to the safety and efficacy assessment of the vaccines promulgated by the drug regulatory authorities of various countries and regions and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Besides publication of Vaccination Fact Sheets which list the expected side effects after vaccination and when it is necessary to seek the advice of healthcare professionals, the DH has made reference to the COVID-19 vaccines safety surveillance strategies recommended by the WHO to enhance the existing passive surveillance and conduct active surveillance. The surveillance measures include:

- (i) A dedicated COVID-19 Vaccine Adverse Event Online Reporting system has been set up (www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/healthcare_providers/adr_reporting/index.html) to receive AEFI reports of COVID-19 vaccines from healthcare professionals and the pharmaceutical industry;
- (ii) Letters to healthcare professionals and relevant organisations have been issued to encourage them to report suspected serious or unexpected AEFIs ([www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/upload/eps_news/43289/EN/1/DHPL_Reporting%20of%20Adverse%20Event%20following%20Immunization%20\(AEFI\)%20of%20COVID-19%20Vaccine.pdf](http://www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/upload/eps_news/43289/EN/1/DHPL_Reporting%20of%20Adverse%20Event%20following%20Immunization%20(AEFI)%20of%20COVID-19%20Vaccine.pdf)); and
- (iii) For active surveillance, the DH has partnered with the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy of the University of Hong Kong to actively collect data of potential adverse events of authorised vaccines, in particular rare or serious adverse events of special interest (AESI) (e.g. Guillain Barre syndrome, acute disseminated encephalomyelitis) from public and private

healthcare facilities and conduct causality assessments. At the same time, comprehensive monitoring of all potential adverse events amongst the different authorised COVID-19 vaccines from selected target groups will also be conducted.

To tie in with the aforementioned surveillance measures, the DH has established the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Expert Committee) for continuous monitoring of potential clinical events (including AEFIs and AESIs) associated with COVID-19 vaccinations and provide expert opinions and advice on the safety monitoring of authorised vaccines. The Expert Committee has formulated the risk communication plan, which covers the monitoring, notification and follow up of reported clinical events. Follow up actions include safety alerts on the concerned vaccine to healthcare professionals, updates of product labels and product information, and instructing the vaccine supplier to conduct recalls, etc. If the risks of the authorised vaccine outweigh the benefits, the DH will take appropriate actions, which include providing the relevant information to the Advisory Panel established under the Regulation to review and consider whether to recommend the Secretary of Food and Health to revoke the authorisation of the concerned vaccine.

The Government is committed to closely monitor the potential serious clinical events after immunisation of COVID-19 vaccines and address public concerns for the protection of public health, and is expected to release and update the data collected on the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk) regularly starting from mid-March.

Woman jailed for engaging in wrongly accepting payment in sale of surgical masks online

A woman who sold surgical masks online was convicted today (February 26) at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts for engaging in wrongly accepting payment, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). She was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that a woman had engaged in unfair trade practices in the sale of surgical masks online. After investigation, it was found that the woman claimed that surgical masks could be offered for sale on a social media platform. Later, she offered to sell 400 boxes of surgical masks of a designated brand at \$120 per box to a consumer through an instant messaging application. However, only 7 800 items of loose-packed masks of various brands were supplied, none of which were from the designated brand. Investigation revealed that the woman involved in

the case had intended to supply a product that was materially different from the masks of the designated brand at the time when payment was accepted.

Customs welcomes the sentence as the custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect, and will continue to combat unfair trade practices with a view to protecting consumer interests. Customs also reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TD0 and consumers to procure products at reputable shops.

Under the TD0, any trader commits an offence if at the time of acceptance of payment the trader intends not to supply the product or intends to supply a materially different product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Employer fined for violation of safety legislation

An employer was fined \$30,000 at Shatin Magistrates' Courts today (February 26) for violation of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance. The prosecution was launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on February 10, 2019, on a village road in Nam Wa Po, Tai Po. While a lorry mounted with an elevating work platform was travelling along the village road for street lamp cleaning work, its work platform was kept in a raised position. The raised work platform struck nearby overhead cables and was deformed. A worker who stayed on the raised work platform was trapped by the deformed work platform. He sustained a serious head injury and died the same day.

Erection of double-arch steel bridge for Cross Bay Link completed (with

[photos/video](#)

Erection of the prefabricated double-arch steel bridge for the Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O, which is also the largest component of the bridge, was completed today (February 26).

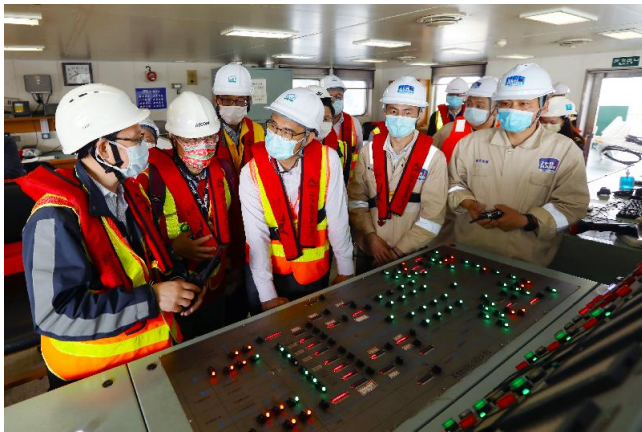
A spokesman for the Civil Engineering and Development Department said, "As the double-arch steel bridge weighs over 10,000 tonnes, the project team adopted the 'float-over method' and took into account the tidal conditions for its erection. The entire process lasted about five hours, commencing from 7am until close to noon. This is the first time the 'float-over method' has been applied for bridge construction in Hong Kong. The project team has conducted a meticulous analysis of every step to ensure smooth execution of the erection process."

Since arriving in Hong Kong on February 16, the semi-submersible barge loaded with the double-arch steel bridge has been moored at the Junk Bay temporary anchorage area in preparation for installation. On February 24, the barge moved to a position 30 metres from the bridge piers for final preparatory work.

At about 7am today, the barge moved in between the bridge piers during the high tide window. After precise positioning of the double-arch steel bridge, the barge pumped in 27,000 cubic metres of seawater for ballast, correspondingly lowering the barge by 1m for the double-arch steel bridge to touch down onto the piers. Successful completion of the erection process marks a key milestone for the Cross Bay Link project.

The about 1.8 kilometre Cross Bay Link in Tseung Kwan O, comprising a marine viaduct of 1km in length, is scheduled for completion in 2022. For more information about the Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O, please visit the project website (www.cbltko.hk).





[Speedpost services to Argentina and Colombia suspended](#)

Hongkong Post today (February 26) announced the suspension of Speedpost services to Argentina and Colombia from tomorrow (February 27) until further notice, as air transport service providers cannot provide the required conveyance services.

Members of the public may visit the Hongkong Post website at www.hongkongpost.hk/en/about_us/whats_new/notices/index_id_1037.html and refer to the types of services currently available to overseas destinations.