

Public consultation launched on control of genuine firearm component parts

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government announced today (February 17) the launch of a four-week public consultation on the control of genuine firearm component parts.

A Government spokesman said, "There has always been stringent control over firearms and their component parts in Hong Kong. In recent years, there has been an increase in cases involving genuine arms in Hong Kong. We found that criminals made use of the loophole in the existing definition of 'arms' under the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance (Cap. 238) to smuggle the component parts of genuine firearms into Hong Kong in separate shipments and then assemble them into fully functional genuine firearms to evade the law. The situation is worrying. The Government considers it necessary to provide a clearer and more concrete definition of firearm component parts to plug this legal loophole."

The Government proposes to amend the Firearms and Ammunition (Declaration of Arms) Regulations (Cap. 238D) to list out specific essential firearm (i.e. genuine firearm) component parts as "arms" under the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance (Cap. 238). The proposed amendments seek to provide a clearer and more concrete description of the component parts covered by "arms". The Government also proposes setting a 90-day grace period to allow those who are affected by the proposal to dispose of the component parts or apply for a licence from the Police before the regulations come into operation.

The spokesman said, "The proposed amendments seek to combat the misuse of arms by criminals in posing threats to citizens' lives and property."

The Government will consolidate the views received upon the conclusion of the consultation period and table the proposed amendments by way of subsidiary legislation at the Legislative Council, with a view to completing the legislative process within the current legislative session.

The consultation paper is available on the website of the Security Bureau (www.sb.gov.hk/eng/special/firearm/index.html). Members of the public can submit their views by mail (Security Bureau, 10/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong), fax (2810 7702) or email (firearms@sb.gov.hk) on or before March 16.

Hong Kong Customs alerts public on suspected unsafe portable UV disinfection devices (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (February 17) announced that a total of 83 pieces of three models of suspected unsafe portable ultraviolet (UV) disinfection devices have been seized earlier. Members of the public should pay extra care with regards to safety when using such products as prolonged or a high dose exposure to ultraviolet C emitted by the disinfection devices may pose a potential health hazard to eyes and skin.

Customs earlier received referrals from a related organisation that six models of portable UV disinfection devices supplied in the market might carry the risk of emitting excessive irradiance of UV radiation. Customs officers immediately conducted inspections at different districts and successfully test-purchased two models for testing.

After initial investigations, the relevant products were suspected to have failed to comply with the general safety requirements of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO). Customs officers then conducted an operation and seized a total of 70 pieces of those two models of suspected unsafe portable UV disinfection devices from a retail shop in Tsim Sha Tsui and another retailer's office in Kwun Tong. During the operation, 13 pieces of another model of suspected unsafe portable UV disinfection device referred by the related organisation were also found at the abovementioned office.

Apart from the retailers in connection with the case, Customs officers also conducted spot checks and inspections in various districts. Those three models of products have not been found on sale so far.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds members of the public to observe the following safety tips when purchasing and using portable UV disinfection device products:

- Do not expose the eyes or skin directly to the UV light emitted from the products;
- Consider wearing protective equipment when using the products;
- Read in detail the instructions for safe use of the products; and
- Do not allow children to use the products unsupervised or to play with the products.

Customs has been combating consistently the sale of products that fall short of the CGSO. Law enforcement action will be taken immediately if any violation of the CGSO is detected. Customs also reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the CGSO in order to protect the safety of consumers.

Under the CGSO, it is an offence to supply, manufacture or import into Hong Kong consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirement for consumer goods. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on subsequent conviction.

Members of the public with information relating to unsafe consumer goods may make a report via Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Franchised bus services gradually return to normal from tomorrow

To align with the relaxation of social distancing measures in a gradual and orderly manner, and fully resume normal public services as announced by the Government, the Transport Department (TD) said today (February 17) that

all franchised bus companies will gradually resume their services during peak periods as scheduled from tomorrow (February 18) to cater for the commuting needs of passengers.

As for bus routes with patronage on the low side during off-peak periods, in general the headway will be lengthened by no more than five minutes while the headway after 10pm will be lengthened by no more than 10 minutes, and the extended headway will not exceed 30 minutes. The TD has requested the franchised bus companies to closely monitor changes in passenger demand and consider adjusting services whenever necessary.

In addition, the frequencies of individual bus routes mainly serving tourists or heading to land boundary control points and the airport continue to be adjusted to limited services or have services suspended due to the anti-pandemic measures on boundary controls implemented earlier.

The TD will maintain close liaison with franchised bus companies, and will closely monitor the operation of all bus routes to follow up on the bus services to meet passenger needs.

GLD's latest service arrangements

The Government Logistics Department (GLD) announced today (February 17) that starting from tomorrow (February 18), the GLD Collection Office on the 10th floor of North Point Government Offices will resume normal operation. It will be open from Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 1pm and from 2pm to 5pm.

Immigration Department service arrangements

The Immigration Department (ImmD) announced today (February 17) that except for passenger immigration clearance service, the ImmD will resume full public services on February 18.

To avoid the gathering of crowds, the ImmD appeals to applicants to submit applications through its homepage or mobile application, or by post or drop-in and should make appointments prior to their visit to shorten the waiting time. Besides, in accordance with the regulations implemented by the Government, persons entering the premises of the ImmD are required to wear masks and comply with the epidemic prevention measures and maintain social distancing.

In addition, according to the existing arrangements of the HKSAR Government, except for the Hong Kong International Airport, Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Points, passenger immigration clearance services in other immigration control points will remain suspended until further notice. Moreover, the operating hours of the passenger clearance services at the Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Points have been adjusted as follows with effect from April 3 and 5 last year respectively until further notice. The details are as follows:

Shenzhen Bay Control Point:

- Operating hours of the Passenger Clearance Building and private cars' passenger clearance services are from 10am to 8pm daily while cargo clearance service was adjusted to 24 hours daily from December 10 last year.

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point:

- Operating hours of the Passenger Clearance Building (i.e. for passengers crossing the boundary on cross-boundary coaches and shuttle buses) are from 10am to 8pm daily; and
- Operating hours of clearance for private cars are from 6am to 10pm daily while cargo clearance will remain in operation 24 hours daily.

For enquiries, please contact the ImmD by calling the enquiry hotline on 2824 6111 from 8.45am to 5.15pm, Monday to Friday; 9am to 12noon on Saturday, except public holidays or by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk.