

Two sorbet samples detected with total bacterial counts exceeding legal limit

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 19) announced that two chocolate flavour sorbet samples were found to contain total bacterial counts exceeding the legal limit. Follow-up is in progress.

"Subsequent to announcing that a sample of chocolate flavour sorbet taken from a retail outlet of frozen confections in Quarry Bay was found to contain a total bacterial count exceeding the legal limit, the CFS detected similar irregularities in a further two chocolate flavour sorbet samples of the same kind but of different manufacturing dates taken respectively from the same retail outlet and the frozen confection factory manufacturing the product concerned for testing during follow-up investigations. The test results showed that the two samples contained total bacterial counts of 610 000 and 730 000 per gram respectively, exceeding the legal limit," a spokesman for the CFS said.

Under the Frozen Confections Regulation (Cap 132AC), frozen confection for sale should not contain more than 50 000 bacteria per gram. The maximum penalty for offenders is a fine of \$10,000 and three months' imprisonment upon conviction. The fact that the total bacterial count exceeded the legal limit indicated that the hygienic conditions were unsatisfactory, but did not mean that consumption would lead to food poisoning.

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularities. The vendor has already, according to the CFS' instructions, stopped selling the affected kind of sorbet at all retail outlets and will dispose of the remaining stock of the affected product. The frozen confection factory concerned has also stopped its production. The CFS has provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the vendor, and requested it to review and improve the food production process and carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection in the frozen confection factory. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted. Both unsatisfactory samples were taken before sale of the affected product was stopped," the spokesman said.