



---

# Press Release

---

PR 1269

17.06.2013

## PERIODIC REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE HEALTH INSPECTORATE SERVICES WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIRECTORATE

The Environmental Health Directorate within the Superintendence of Public Health is making every effort to keep its contact with the public through a regular press statement. The following is a summary of actions taken during **MAY**, 2013.

### SUMMARISED REPORT

The following is a summary of the report hereunder:

- **501** improvement notices were issued;
- **4** HACCP audits were carried out;
- **9** undertakings were issued;
- **105.6kg** of foodstuffs and **610kg** of melamine plates were destroyed;
- **12** Legionella audits carried out;
- **33** swimming pools were audited during **13** audits;
- **13** schools inspected;
- **12** abatement notices issued;
- **55** consignments of imported food were inspected;
- **1828** notifications of food and **15** of food supplements for importing/trading into Malta;
- **743** personal parcels checked of which **17** were rejected;
- **16** Ship Sanitation certificates were issued;
- **95** applications were processed;
- **1978** control cards for narcotics and psychotropic substances were issued;
- **10** illegal tobacco related adverts and **2** illegal tattoo adverts were removed;
- **611** samples were elevated and analysed;
- **9** products recalled;
- **15** citations issued/processed;
- **628** complaints were lodged with the Health Inspectorate.

### DETAILED REPORT

#### **IMPROVEMENT NOTICES ISSUED TO FOOD BUSINESS OPERATORS**

**Five hundred and one improvement notices** in terms of article 33 of the Food Safety Act were issued to food business operators by the Health Inspectorate Services. During this period **56 improvement notices** were also issued to open market stalls.

An improvement notice is sent to all food business operators following an unannounced inspection by Environmental Health Officers within their establishment. The intention of this notice is to

Attachments: None

Page: 1 of 5

inform food operators about deficiencies noted in their establishments while the operator is given a specific deadline in order to rectify these deficiencies. Though the seriousness of deficiencies might vary, legal action is initiated when major deficiencies are noted.

#### **HACCP AUDITS**

**Four HACCP audits** were carried out. The **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point** is a Food Safety Management System which is obligatory in those food businesses providing high risk foods.

#### **UNDERTAKINGS**

**9 undertakings** were entered into by the Health Inspectorate, and concerned several food and environmental health related issues.

Undertakings are legal agreements between the operators and the Health Authority specifying deadlines by which deficiencies in their premises should be remedied in compliance with standing legislation. Failure to abide with the agreed deadlines results in Court proceedings being initiated.

#### **DESTRUCTION OF FOOD**

The amount of **foodstuffs** destroyed by the Health Inspectorate was **105.627kgs**.

These foodstuffs included:

- Meat and poultry products 56.4kg
- Fresh and frozen vegetables 11.kg
- Bakery items 10.3kg
- Prepared snacks 2.3kg
- Fish products 4.9kg
- Confectionery items 16.7kg
- Sauces, spices and delicatessen 4kg

**610 kg (3072 in number)** melamine plates were also destroyed during this month.

#### **LEGIONELLA AUDITS AND POOL INSPECTIONS**

**Twelve audits** at Hotels, and other similar premises to ascertain compliance with Control of Legionella Regulations, 2006 (L.N. 5 of 2006) and the Registration of Cooling Towers and Evaporative Condensers Regulations, 2006 (L.N. 6 of 2006) were performed by the Health Inspectorate.

**Thirty-three swimming pools** were inspected during **thirteen audits** carried out by the Health Inspectorate to verify compliance with Swimming Pools Regulations, 2005 (L.N. 129 of 2005). **3 new pools** were registered with the Health Authority during this month. This regulation specifies that all swimming pools with the exception of those situated at a single family residence need to register with this Directorate. A list of registered pools can be found in the Directorate's website mentioned below.

#### **INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS**

**13 schools** were inspected to ensure compliance with general hygiene requirements. Such inspections are carried out in private, government or church owned schools and whether, primary, secondary, tertiary or language or special schools.

## **ABATEMENT NOTICES**

**12 abatement notices** were issued by the Health Inspectorate in terms of the Public Health Act in view of inspections and audits carried out in the previous days.

## **CONSIGNMENTS**

**Fifty-five consignments** of food imported/traded into Malta were also inspected by Environmental Health Officers attached with the Port Health Services within this Directorate.

## **CONSIGNMENTS DOCUMENTARY CHECKS**

**1828 requests for importation/trading of foodstuffs** and **15 requests for importation of food supplements** were submitted to the Port Health Services as required by Trading Regulations of 2004 (Legal Notice 315 of 2004 which can be downloaded from <http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11120&l=1>).

All traders of food including food contact materials and food supplements are reminded to notify the Port Health Services, 48hours in advance as explained in Press Release 1531 issued on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 (URL: [http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press\\_releases/2011/08/pr1531.pdf](http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press_releases/2011/08/pr1531.pdf)).

## **PERSONAL IMPORTS**

**743 personal consignments** were also screened by the Port Health Services, of which **17 were rejected**.

## **SHIP SANITATION CERTIFICATES**

**Sixteen** Ship Sanitation Certificates were issued by the Port Health Services. These inspections are carried out in terms of the International Health Regulations of 2005 and involve the assessment of the general hygienic conditions and control measures undertaken on ships. A Ship Sanitation Certificate needs to be renewed every 6 months at an authorised port; Malta being an authorised port.

## **APPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS**

The Health Inspectorate received **95 requests to process applications** to operate food and non-food business. Prospective operators who wish to open such businesses are obliged to apply for a permit with the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) and then apply for the actual licence with the competent authority such as the Trade Licensing Unit or Malta Tourism Authority. At every stage, this Directorate is consulted in order to verify suitability of proposed premises.

## **CONTROL CARDS FOR NARCOTIC AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES**

**1978 control cards for narcotic and psychotropic substances** (776 males and 1202 females) were issued by the Drug Control Unit, which is another unit falling under the Health Inspectorate Services. **218 of these cards** were **new applications**.

These cards are issued when a medical doctor deems that a person needs to be prescribed a psychotropic drug. An application form is filled in and handed over to the patient which is in turn submitted to the Drug Control Unit, Shop 12, City Gate, Valletta Tel; 21245490.

## **ILLEGAL ADVERTISEMENTS**

**10 adverts** involving Tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes in breach of Tobacco (Smoking Control) Act were noticed on local sites and the respective advertisers and webmasters were instructed to remove such adverts - something which was actually complied with.

**Two** adverts of tattoo equipment were also noted to be contravention of the Control of Tattooing Act.

#### SAMPLES

**611 samples** were elevated by the Health Inspectorate and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory for analysis and/or examination for several parameters.

#### RECALLS

**Nine products were recalled** as follows:

- Press Release number 0899 issued on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 (URL: <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=9181>)
- Press Release number 0948 issued on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 (URL: <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=9194>)
- Press Release number 0951 issued on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 (URL: <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=9196>)
- Press Release number 1086 issued on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 (URL: <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=9211>)
- Press Release number 1135 issued on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2013 (URL: <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=9237>)
- Press Release number 1136 issued on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2013 (URL: <https://ehealth.gov.mt/download.aspx?id=9239>)

#### CONTRAVENTIONS

**Fifteen contraventions** were issued/processed by the Health Inspectorate, **seven** of which were related to food safety issues:

- A retailer for not having appropriate washing facilities, another retailer for not being registered with FSC and another operator for employing unregistered food handlers
- An individual for keeping food inside a vehicle not at a suitable temperature and keeping food in risk of contamination;
- A butcher shop for not adhering with the licence conditions and not having proper traceability;
- One operator for not abiding to an undertaking; and
- Another operator for not having proper traceability and also having products with misleading labelling.

**Eight** were environmental health related:

- One individual for keeping a garage with accumulation of rubbish;
- Two individuals for keeping accumulations of stagnant and dirty water;
- Three individuals for smoking in public places;
- One individual for smoking in an enclosed place and one individual for permitting smoking in same enclosed space.

## **EMERGENCY CONTROL ORDERS**

No emergency control orders were issued against operators.

## **EMERGENCY PROHIBITION ORDERS**

No emergency prohibition orders were issued against operators.

## **COMPLAINTS**

**628 complaints** were lodged with the Directorate which were categorised in one or more category, as follows:

### **o Food related complaints**

134 complaints were related to food. The most common type of food related complaints were: improper labeling (25 complaints), risk of contamination (18 complaints), storage of food (15 complaints), fitness of food (13 complaints) and hygiene of food premises (13 complaints).

### **o Other Environmental Health related complaints**

Another 569 complaints were environmental health related. The most common complaints were: pest infestations (126 complaints), infiltrations (120 complaints), accumulation of refuse (33 complaints), foul smells (32 complaints), keeping of animals in unhygienic conditions (30 complaints), leakage/defective drains (21 complaints).

**Note: The number of complaints and the number of categories do not tally, since one complaint received may encompass one or more categories.**

The Environmental Health Directorate takes this opportunity to remind the public that it can contact the Health Inspectorate Services between 08:00am and 3:00pm on telephone number 21337333, by calling personally at its offices at Continental Business Centre, Old Railway Track, Santa Venera or by email [complaints.ph@gov.mt](mailto:complaints.ph@gov.mt)

For further information, the public is also encouraged to visit the Directorate's website at URL: [https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/public\\_health/environmental-health/department\\_for\\_env\\_health.aspx](https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/public_health/environmental-health/department_for_env_health.aspx) or on its facebook page on <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Environmental-Health-Directorate-Malta/145027878928626>