



Press Release

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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 **JULY**, 2013.

SUMMARISED REPORT

The following is a summary of the report hereunder:

- **537** improvement notices were issued;
- **18** undertakings were issued;
- **17.9kg** of foodstuffs, **6125.8lts** of water and drinks and **2400 rolls** of food contact material were destroyed;
- **9** Legionella audits carried out;
- **31** swimming pools were audited during **10** audits;
- **2** schools inspected;
- **19** abatement notices issued;
- **36** consignments of imported food were inspected;
- **2225** notifications of food and **928** of food supplements for importing/trading into Malta;
- **1684** personal parcels checked of which **3** were rejected;
- **27** Ship Sanitation certificates were issued;
- **183** applications were processed;
- **815** control cards for narcotics and psychotropic substances were issued;
- **1** illegal tobacco related advert and **7** illegal tattoo adverts were removed;
- **639** samples were elevated and analysed;
- **3** products recalled;
- **17** citations issued/processed;
- **795** complaints were lodged with the Health Inspectorate.
- **369** inspections in food premises in connection with smoking in public places were made. **5** persons were charged.

DETAILED REPORT

IMPROVEMENT NOTICES ISSUED TO FOOD BUSINESS OPERATORS

Five hundred and thirty seven 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 **22 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 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

No 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

18 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 **17.9kgs and 6125.8lts of water and drinks**.

The foodstuffs included:

- Meat and meat products – 6.6kgs
- Powdered soup – 1.3kgs
- Delicatessen products – 10kgs

2400 rolls of food contact material (plastic wrap) were also destroyed during this month.

LEGIONELLA AUDITS AND POOL INSPECTIONS

Nine 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 one swimming pools were inspected during **ten audits** carried out by the Health Inspectorate to verify compliance with Swimming Pools Regulations, 2005 (L.N. 129 of 2005). **4 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

2 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

19 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

Thirty six 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

2225 requests for importation/trading of foodstuffs and 928 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 13th August, 2011 (URL: http://www.doi.gov.mt/EN/press_releases/2011/08/pr1531.pdf).

PERSONAL IMPORTS

1684 personal consignments were also screened by the Port Health Services, of which **3 were rejected**.

SHIP SANITATION CERTIFICATES

Twenty-seven 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 **183 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

815 control cards for narcotic and psychotropic substances (302 males and 513 females) were issued by the Drug Control Unit, which is another unit falling under the Health Inspectorate Services. **172 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

1 advert involving Tobacco products in breach of Tobacco (Smoking Control) Act was noticed and the respective advertiser was instructed to remove such advert - something which was actually complied with.

Seven adverts of tattoo equipment were also noted to be in contravention of the Control of Tattooing Act.

SAMPLES

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

BATHING WATER MONITORING PROGRAMME

During the month of July, **435 samples of sea water** were collected and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory to be analysed for microbiological parameters as stipulated by EU Directive 2006/7/EC. The bathing water monitoring programme is carried out in accordance with the provisions of said EU Directive. The official bathing season started on the 13th May 2013 and will last till the 20th October 2013. Sampling is carried out from 87 official bathing sites throughout the Maltese islands.

Up to the 12th week of the monitoring programme the 87 sites have been classified as follows: 87 sites as Excellent Quality, **no** sites as Good, Sufficient or Poor Quality.

RECALLS

Three products were recalled as follows:

- Press Release number 1479 issued on 7th July, 2013 (URL: <http://gov.mt/en/Government/Press%20Releases/Pages/2013/July/11/pr1479.aspx>)
- Press Release number 1585 issued on 24th July 2013 (URL: <http://gov.mt/en/Government/Press%20Releases/Pages/2013/July/24/pr1585.aspx>)

CONTRAVENTIONS

Seventeen contraventions were issued / processed by the Health Inspectorate, **six** of which was related to food safety issues:

- One person responsible for a food outlet for not abiding to the conditions of license. Same person was charged for not abiding to an Emergency prohibition Order.
- Two persons were charged for not keeping a traceability system, for using a place for food processing without the necessary license and for offering for sale food without a proper label.
- One person for not keeping a traceable system, for keeping food in a risk of contamination and having a pest infestation inside the food premises.
- One person was charged for keeping food (cheeselets) not at a proper temperature, for not providing a 'use by' date and for not providing a lot number on the label.

- Two persons cited one the same contravention for putting food for sale without proper labelling and for using a vehicle not registered with the Superintendent of Public Health.

Eleven were environmental health related:

- Seven persons were charged for smoking and/or permitting smoking inside a public place.
- One person for keeping drains in a bad state of repair.
- One person for keeping an accumulation of refuse inside an open space.
- One person for keeping internal and external parts of house dirty.
- One person for letting foul water flow into the street.

FROM THE LAW COURTS

During the second quarter of this year, **60 cases** (out of **191 cases**) were decided by the Magistrates' Court during various Health Sittings held. From these cases **17** were new, whilst the remaining were brought forward from other months/years.

From the cases heard in the last quarter, those found guilty were given conditional discharges ranging from **8 months to 'no period given'** and fines, the total of which amounted to **€4600**. The fines were imposed on:

- Christopher Drago was fined **€200** for giving false information to the Health Authority and for failing to abide with an undertaking which was entered on the 27th July, 2006. Mr. Drago was fined another **€200** for failing to abide with an undertaking which was entered on the 27th July, 2005, failing to register as a trader with the Food Safety Commission and working as a food handler without registering with the Food Safety Commission on the 26th March, 2006.
- General Distributors Ltd., Baker's Street, Qormi was fined **€500** for not having a water supply, failing to install a staff toilet inside store, premises and employing food handlers who were not registered with the Food Safety Commission; for failing to have a HACCP system and exposing food to risk of contamination on the 29th August, 2006.
- Joseph Mizzi & Nazzareno Camilleri were fined **€200 each** for having a rain water system communicated to the sewage system inside Garage and 'Ave Maria House' in Triq Dun Bartolomew Attard, Żebbuġ on the 17th November, 2008.

Other fines charged for not abiding to undertakings entered on different dates:

- Pinto Band Club, 77, Triq San Bastjan, Qormi was fined **€470**.
- Sharma Ethnic Cuisine, Triq l-Imħażen, Mdina was fined **€470**.
- Cilia Products, St. Thomas Street, Hamrun was fined **€470**.
- San Filippo Confectionary, Triq Dun Anton Vella, Siggiewi was fined **€470**.
- Trattoria Palazz, Triq it-Teatru l-Antik, Valletta was fined **€470**.
- Eskimo Store, Triq Felice, Zabbar was fined **€470**.
- 27A, 'Minerva', Triq Misraħ il-Barrieri, Msida was fined **€480**.

The following is a list of sentences given where necessary works were ordered to be carried out within a stipulated period and a daily fine was imposed in case of non-compliance.

- ‘Dar it-Torri l-Aħmar’, Triq it-Torri l-Aħmar, Rabat, for not having a toilet communicated with the sewage system and sink not connected onto a gully in the open air back in March, 1994. Necessary works are to be effected within 3 months from sentence and a €5 (euro) daily fine was imposed in case of non compliance.
- ‘Dar it-Torri l-Aħmar’, Triq it-Torri l-Aħmar, Rabat, for not connecting the bath onto a gully in the open air back in February, 2004. Necessary works are to be effected within 1 year from sentence and a €5 (euro) daily fine was imposed in case of non compliance.
- Garage with no name and number between ‘England Rose’ & ‘Maria’, Jannara Street B’Kara, for keeping accumulation of rubbish in April, 2008. Rubbish is to be removed within 2 months from sentence and a €10 (euro) daily fine was imposed in case of non-compliance.
- Garage No. 3, Triq il-Ġdida fi Triq Carini, St. Venera, for keeping accumulations of rubbish in same garage in August, 2008. Rubbish is to be removed within 2 months from sentence and a €10 (euro) daily fine was imposed in case of non-compliance.
- Joseph Briffa Bakery, Old Mint Street, Valletta for exposing food to risk of contamination, for failing to providing a wash hand basin with a supply of hot water at a suitably controlled temperature, anteroom not adequately lighted and ventilated and for keeping premises in a bad state of hygiene in January, 2008. Deficiencies are to be rectified within 1 year from sentence and a €10 (euro) daily fine was imposed in case of non compliance.
- ‘St. Michael House’, Tas-Sirena, Bahrija l/o Rabat for not having toilet facilities, kitchen sink drains not connected onto a gully in the open air and for obstructing the carrying out of necessary works in June, 2009. Necessary works are to be effected within 4 months from sentence and a €50 (euro) daily fine was imposed in case of non compliance.

The following persons/entities were given a Conditional Discharge for a stipulated period:

8 months

- Lorry Farrugia & Sons, Labour Road, Zejtun for failing to notify the Health Authority with a consignment on January, 2012.
- Dolce Sicilia, Dragonara Road, Paceville, San Giljan for failing to provide pest control measures, for keeping equipment which comes in contact with food in a bad state of hygiene and condition, for failing to protect food from risk of contamination, premises was not kept clean, drainage facilities not constructed to avoid risk of contamination, staff toilet not provided with a ventilated anteroom, employing food handlers which were not registered with the Food Safety Commission and for failing to provide a wash hand basin with cold and hot water in September, 2011.

6 months

- No. 53, Triq il-Parroċċa, Mosta, for keeping a diary farm without obtaining a license from the Health Authority in May, 2000.
- Farm next to No. 53, Triq il-Parroċċa, Mosta, for keeping accumulations of manure, exercise yard and rain water pipe not according to law in March, 2009.

- Anthony Buhagiar at the Farmers' Market, 'Ta' Indri Kiosk', Ta' Qali l/o Attard, for not having facilities for the washing of hands and equipment in December, 2011.
- Wok to Walk, No. 134, The Strand, Gzira, for not keeping the premises and the equipment in a good state of hygiene, food exposed to risk of contamination and for failing to keep walls and floor in a good state of repair and condition in November, 2012.
- Adira Sailing Lido/The Big Blu, Marfa Road, l/o Mellieħa, for keeping food (milk & milk products) at temperatures which could result in a risk to health, premises was not registered with the Food Safety Commission and for not having a traceability system of food suppliers in July, 2012.

3 months

- Vehicle Registration Number DAA 305, in Triq il-Karmnu c/w Triq is-Sorijiet, Tarxien, for failing to provide a wash hand basin, not having a supply of cold and hot water and vehicle DAA 305 was not registered with Food Safety Commission in October, 2012.
- Fruit Drops, Triq Sant'Anglu, Żejtun, for working as a foodhandler without being registered with the Food Safety Commission, for keeping refrigerated food products at a temperature above 8°C and for failing to identify the Critical Control Points in April, 2012.
- Green Acres, No.22, Triq Gia Cint Tua, Gzira, for selling food items with lapsed Use By Date in August, 2012.

The following were all given a ***3 month*** Conditional Discharge for having in possession cigarette packages which did not bear the combined pictorial health warnings as requested by law.

- Iris Joan Douglas Markham, Sunny Coast Mini Market, Qawra Road, Qawra.
- Sir Anthony's Wines & Spirit, 41, Depiro Street, Sliema.
- EverFresh Greengrocer, Triq Ġużeppi Xuereb, B'Kara.

1 month

- Nazzarenu Scicluna, for the dumping of rubbish in the area of Wied Qirda Limiti ta' Haż-Żebbuġ, back in October, 2005.
- Army & Navy Bar, Triq il-Kbira, Hamrun, for working as a food handler without being registered with the Food Safety Commission in November, 2011.

1 week

- Clinton Galea obo All for Property Ltd. at L-Għawdxi, Triq Sant'Antnin, M'Scala, for obstructing the health authorities from performing their duties back in September, 2008.
- Clinton Galea obo All for Property Ltd. at Old City Bar, Triq San Lawrenz, Vittoriosa, for importing food in breach of the food labelling regulations, for removing food items without permission by the Health Authority, food products with tampered date of durability, for obstructing the health authorities from performing their duties and not giving the Health Authority required information in March 2008.
- Clinton Galea obo All for Property Ltd. at:
 - i. L-Għawdxi, Triq Sant'Antnin, M'Scala;

- ii. FIF's Pastizzerija, Triq Testa Ferrata, Gzira;
- iii. Sphinx Pastizzerija, Triq San Pawl, Cospicua;
- iv. Regent Self Service, Triq Mosta, St. Paul's Bay;
- v. El Burritos, Triq Sant'Antnin, M'Scala;
- vi. Qormi Boċċi Club, Triq il-Wied, Qormi

for importing food in Malta in breach of the food labeling regulations, for removing food items without permission by the Health Authorities, for exposing for sale food products with tampered date of durability, for obstructing the health authorities from performing their duties and for not giving the Health Authorities required information in March, 2008.

No Specific Conditional Discharge Period Given

- 'Casa Serena', Sir Luigi Preziosi Square, Bugibba, for failing to abide with abatement notice issued on the 9th February, 2012.
- J n I, Triq Fra Diegu, Hamrun, for the manufacture of burgers and prepared meats without the SPH license on the 7th March, 2012.
- Eskimo Store, Triq Felice, Żabbar, for not providing a sink with cold and hot water behind counter, premises was not adequately lighted, for having shelves that had edges which were not smooth, easy to clean and non-absorbent, for not providing wash hand basins with a supply of cold and hot water at a suitably controlled temperature in the toilet room and behind the counter and for keeping the walls in the toilet room not in a good condition on the 22nd August, 2012.

EMERGENCY CONTROL ORDERS

One emergency control order was issued against one person.

EMERGENCY PROHIBITION ORDERS

During last month, no premises were closed down by the Health Authority.

COMPLAINTS

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

o Food related complaints

158 complaints were related to food. The most common type of food related complaints were: improper labelling (26 complaints), hygiene of food premises (25 complaints) and risk of contamination (21 complaints).

o Other Environmental Health related complaints

Another **679** complaints were environmental health related. The most common complaints were: pest infestations (186 complaints), infiltrations (114 complaints), accumulation of refuse (69 complaints), discharge of foul water (50 complaints) and foul smells (44 complaints).

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

TOBACCO SURVEILLANCE

369 inspections were carried out in food premises in connection with tobacco surveillance. **5** persons who were found smoking or allowed smoking within food premises are being charged.

FOCUS REPORTS

The July focus report was titled ‘A focus on Food Recalls and Warnings’. This will be uploaded on the EHD’s website at URL: https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/public_health/environmental-health/publications/publications.aspx .

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

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 or on its facebook page on <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Environmental-Health-Directorate-Malta/145027878928626>

The information provided in this report has been compiled by the staff at the Environmental Health Directorate on the basis of information received by the Directorate. The figures used in this report are provided for informational purposes only and are subject to revision. The author and the Environmental Health Directorate are not liable for any mistakes, errors or omissions in this report.