

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

February 15 - 21, 2024

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, through the Office of International Cooperation, conducted trainings for migrant health volunteers on epidemiology for surveillance, prevention, control of diseases, and investigation in Ubon Ratchathani Province. The workshop took place from February 20 to 21, 2024, in Sirindhorn District, Ubon Ratchathani Province. The meeting aimed to strengthen the network for coordination with public health agencies and village health volunteers to improve the efficiency of their operations. Approximately 50 participants attended the meeting, including migrant and village health volunteers, and representatives from the Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Health Office, the Sirindhorn District Health Office, the Cross-Border Disease Control Checkpoint, health promoting hospitals, the Ubon Ratchathani Provincial Health Office, and the Ministry of Public Health. The event featured speakers from the Office of International Cooperation, the Division of Epidemiology, the Raks Thai Foundation, the World Vision Foundation, and the Thailand One Health University Network.
- Information from BlueDot Event Alerts reported on February 21, 2024, indicated there was a case of avian influenza A (H9) in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, People's Republic of China. The patient is a 1-year-old girl with no history of contact with poultry. Currently, she is receiving treatment at the hospital with symptoms including fever, cough, and mucus. Previously, there were reports that the patient's mother experienced a sore throat. In 1999, in the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, there were reports of 9 cases with no reported fatalities.

## STAY AWARE AND STAY SAFE FROM LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE

The Thailand MOPH outbreak investigation report from February 12-18, 2024, stated that there have been reports of patients with Legionnaires' disease at tourist destinations in Thailand. Currently, the disease is under investigation. Legionnaires' disease is considered a disease that can significantly impact Thailand's tourism economy. Thailand first reported cases of Legionnaires' disease in 1984, initially among Thai nationals. Subsequent reports involved foreign tourists visiting Thailand, with cases almost every year, though the numbers were not high. Legionnaires' disease is caused by a bacterium that rapidly affects the lower respiratory system. It is transmitted through inhalation of contaminated water droplets or fluid. Symptoms range from general flu-like symptoms to severe conditions. If not treated appropriately, it can lead to respiratory failure and death. The incubation period is generally 2-10 days, with symptoms often appearing within 5-6 days. Pontiac fever, which is caused by the same causative agent, is milder than Legionnaires' disease and patients do not present with signs of pneumonia.

Legionnaires' disease is not a new disease and it does not easily occur. Outbreaks usually remain confined to specific environments, often affecting people in the same location. It is commonly found in tourists staying in accommodations such as hotels, guesthouses, rented rooms, or resorts. The presence of the bacterium in such places may be due to insufficient cleanliness of the water supply system used in the cooling process of air-conditioning units. Past investigations have shown that air-conditioning units are a common source of the disease. Accommodation providers should follow the "Guidelines for Controlling and Monitoring the Spread of Legionnaires' Disease" prepared by the Environmental Health Bureau, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health, to reduce the risk of the disease spreading in Thailand.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Local officials should coordinate with the Ministry of Public Health and local environmental agencies to jointly inform residents, as well as accommodation providers such as hotels, guesthouses, resorts, and rental rooms, about the current situation regarding Legionnaires' disease. This includes the causes of the disease, modes of transmission, and early symptoms. Accommodation providers should ensure the cleanliness of the water system used in their operations, particularly in the process of air conditioning. For the general public, it is essential to be aware of early symptoms, especially if there is a history of staying in hotels outside the local area. If abnormal symptoms related to the mentioned disease occur, seeking immediate medical attention and providing a travel history to the medical professionals are crucial. For organizations responsible for healthcare and environmental monitoring in the area, regular assessments of the cleanliness of water systems used by accommodations in the region should be implemented consistently. These measures aim to prevent the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in the area.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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## Sources

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- <https://he05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/WESR/article/view/214>
- <https://www.gcc.go.th/?p=84374> <https://www.gcc.go.th/?p=103642>
- <https://thestandard.co/moph-legionella-pneumophila/>
- Information courtesy of: International Cooperation Development Network Group, Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control, February 22, 2024.
- Image courtesy of: Controlling the Spread of Leptospirosis, Bureau of Environmental Health, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health.