

CHP investigates 59 additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 4pm yesterday (March 29), the CHP is investigating 59 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 642 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 641 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Moreover, the DH has further extended its Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme yesterday to all asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving from all places under the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E).

Specimen collection containers will be provided to these travellers at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) for collection of their deep throat saliva samples for testing. The DH has set up a Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at the AsiaWorld-Expo (TSCC) to speed up the collection of specimen from inbound travellers from overseas for conducting testing for COVID-19, and facilitate those who have difficulty in arranging family members or friends to submit their specimen during home quarantine.

The DH urges the relevant inbound travellers to proceed to the TSCC immediately from the HKIA. They should provide their deep throat saliva sample in accordance with the instructions and submit it to the DH personnel on duty at the TSCC, for sending to the CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch for COVID-19 testing as soon as possible.

Those travellers who opt to collect their own deep throat saliva sample during home quarantine should do so at the earliest opportunity and ask their family members or friends to deliver it to any of the collection points in the same morning. The collection points are 13 designated chest clinics or dermatological clinics under the DH from 9am to 11am on Monday to Sunday and also some General Out-patient clinics under the Hospital Authority from 8.30am to 9.30am on Monday to Friday (except public holiday).

The newly reported cases announced yesterday involve 30 males and 29 females aged between 11 and 77. Among them, 43 had travel history during the incubation period and 18 are overseas students. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

For information on flights that patients of the confirmed cases have taken, please refer to the following webpage: (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/flights_trains_en.pdf). Passengers who travelled on the same flights and sat within two seats surrounding those patients are urged to call the CHP hotlines 2125 1111 and 2125 1122.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

In particular, the CHP reminded those who have returned to Hong Kong from overseas or visited overseas before the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) took effect on March 19 that, although they are not subject to the 14-day compulsory quarantine, they should stay home and avoid going out as far as possible for 14 days. They should wear surgical mask, maintain stringent personal hygiene as a measure to protect themselves and their family members. They should seek medical advice as soon as possible if symptoms develop to safeguard the health of themselves, family and friends as well as the general public.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of proliferation of the disease and continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong."

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes."

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use; after using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up the hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm yesterday, a total of 68 592 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They

are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Update on COVID-19 test centres

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

From March 20 to 9pm today (March 29), 606 and 158 people have been referred to the test centres at the AsiaWorld-Expo and North Lantau Hospital respectively for COVID-19 viral test. So far, 678 people have negative test results for COVID-19 and have returned to their residence to continue the home quarantine.

Preliminary positive test results will be further confirmed by the Department of Health and announced as confirmed cases in due course.

[A male Police officer preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19](#)

A 31-year-old male officer who is stationed in Kowloon West Region was preliminarily tested positive for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Posted to the Police Tactical Unit, he participated in anti-crime patrols and had no travel history over the past 14 days. He felt unwell today (March 29) and sought medical treatment at a hospital and was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19.

In the interest of public health, Police have deployed the following measures:

1. Before further assessment and recommendation by the Department of Health (DH), all officers from the same unit will not conduct duties that require interaction with members of the public;
2. All officers working in the Police Tactical Unit Kowloon West Operational Base are required to wear masks, and everyone entering police stations needs to have their body temperature measured in order to ensure public health and safety;
3. All facilities in the Police station and vehicles concerned will be sterilised;
4. Police will deploy resources flexibly to ensure provision of emergency services remains unaffected;
5. Police have reminded officers to pay attention to personal hygiene and reduce social contact to minimise risks of infection. If feeling unwell, they should consult a doctor and report the case.

Police will continue to maintain close communication with the DH and proactively provide information such as the duty record and roster of the officer concerned. Arrangements will be made for close contacts to be conveyed to quarantine centres to undergo quarantine.

[CE inspects social distance enhancement measures in restaurants \(with photos/video\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited restaurants in a commercial building at Quarry Bay this afternoon (March 29) to inspect their implementation of various epidemic preventive measures in accordance with the requirements of the regulation which took effect from 6pm yesterday (March

28).

Accompanied by Executive Council member, Mr Tommy Cheung, Mrs Lam inspected a Chinese restaurant and an eatery. She learned from the person-in-charge that various measures to reduce the risk of spreading the virus had been implemented in accordance with the regulation and that self-initiated actions such as providing discounts for take-away food and arranging seats to enable customers to face the same direction had been taken as with other restaurants to support the fight against the disease. Mrs Lam learned that customers of the Chinese restaurant and the eatery are generally supportive of the Government's target to enhance social distancing among the public and are in agreement with various hygienic arrangements. She also expressed gratitude for the efforts of the restaurants' staff members amid the epidemic, adding that the Government will pay special attention to the pressure on the staff in formulating a new round of relief measures for the trade.

Regarding the direction related to the catering business, issued in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), catering premises were required to implement six measures starting at 6pm yesterday. The measures include ensuring the number of customers must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity of the premises; a distance of at least 1.5 metres between one table and another table is maintained or other partition arrangements are made; no more than four persons are seated together at a table; a person must wear a mask except when he/she is consuming food or drink on the premises; body temperature screening on persons entering the premises is conducted and hand sanitisers are provided for them. In addition, the second part of the regulation requires the closure of six categories of premises including amusement game centres, bathhouses, fitness centres, places of amusement, places of public entertainment such as cinemas, and "party rooms" for hire for holding social gatherings.

"Apart from the regulation on the catering business and various premises, the Government has also made a regulation to prohibit group gatherings of more than four people in public places effective from 0.00am this morning. The various new requirements will inevitably affect members of the public and related sectors, but in the face of the severe epidemic situation, it is necessary for the Government to adopt resolute and stringent measures. I announced days earlier that the Government will launch the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund to further support sectors affected by the epidemic, and have requested employers not to lay off their staff due to the anti-epidemic measures during this period," said Mrs Lam.

"Now is a critical moment in our fight against the epidemic. I urge every member of the public to put up with the inconvenience in their daily lives, go out less often and maintain personal hygiene to win this battle against the disease for ourselves, and for Hong Kong."



[HK SAR Government continues to follow up on Hong Kong residents still in Peru and Morocco](#)

In response to media enquiries on cases of Hong Kong residents stranded in Peru, a Government spokesman said today (March 29) that the Security Bureau and the Immigration Department (ImmD) have been liaising closely with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (OCMFA), the Chinese Embassy in the Republic of Peru (Chinese Embassy in

Peru), the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), relevant travel agencies and airlines to keep abreast of the situation there and take follow-up actions.

As at noon today, the ImmD has received a total of 86 assistance requests from Hong Kong residents stranded in Peru, including more than 30 group tour members. Five of those who sought assistance have left Peru already through other arrangements.

For the Hong Kong residents remaining there, as Peru has declared a state of emergency and imposed strict restrictions on all land and air traffic, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has contacted the Chinese Embassy in Peru and a number of airlines to make every effort to secure flight bookings or arrange a flight for the return of the stranded Hong Kong residents, and make necessary applications to the local authorities. Among the Hong Kong residents there, some are in different places in Peru. They would have to take domestic flights or other land transports to go to Lima, Peru's capital, to facilitate arrangement of their departure collectively by an international flight from Lima out of Peru. The HKSAR Government is actively following up on the matter and once the relevant arrangement has been worked out, it will notify the Hong Kong residents concerned of the latest flight information at the earliest possible.

As notified by the Chinese Embassy in Peru, one of the Hong Kong residents passed away the day before from COVID-19 infection. Upon receipt of the notification, the ImmD has immediately contacted the family of the deceased and provided advice and assistance as appropriate having regard to their wishes. The ImmD will continue to work with the Chinese Embassy in Peru to provide assistance to them.

Separately, the HKSAR Government has continued to closely follow up on the Hong Kong residents stranded in Morocco, and maintain close liaison with the OCMFA, the Chinese Embassy in the Kingdom of Morocco (Chinese Embassy in Morocco), the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in China, the TIC, relevant travel agencies and airlines. The ImmD has received assistance requests from 150 Hong Kong residents concerning the home passage from Morocco. Among them, 70 are from group tours. To assist the Hong Kong residents to return to Hong Kong, the HKSAR Government has been taking actions on multiple fronts, including seeking information from the Moroccan authorities about the operation of commercial flights in Morocco through the Office of the Government of the HKSAR of the People's Republic of China in Beijing and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in China. It has also been actively liaising with a number of airlines to secure flight bookings for the affected Hong Kong residents to fly out of Morocco to destinations at which they could transit back to Hong Kong.

As at noon today, 113 Hong Kong residents have either already returned Hong Kong by different flights, or have secured return arrangements. For the 37 Hong Kong residents remaining in Morocco, they are mainly in the cities of Casablanca and Marrakesh. The HKSAR Government is actively following up with the Chinese embassy in Morocco and a number of airlines to make every effort

to secure flight bookings or arrange a flight for the return of the stranded Hong Kong residents. It will notify the Hong Kong residents concerned of the latest flight information at the earliest possible.

Hong Kong residents travelling outside Hong Kong who need assistance may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department at (852) 1868.