

Protestors block roads with traffic cones in the vicinity of Sai Yeung Choi Street South in Mong Kok

At about 8pm today (August 31), protestors have gathered and chanted slogans in Mong Kok. Some have blocked carriageways with traffic cones on Sai Yeung Choi Street South. Police at scene have repeatedly given warnings and taken resolute dispersal and arrest operations.

Police do not condone any illegal violent acts, and warn participants to leave immediately. Police would take resolute enforcement actions according to the situation at scene and bring offenders to justice.

Pok Oi Hospital announces a patient tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Pok Oi Hospital (POH) made the following announcement today (August 31) concerning a male patient tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A 64-year-old male patient sought consultation in Accident and Emergency Department (AED) of POH at around 5pm yesterday (August 30) due to shortness of breath and fever. His oxygen level in blood was low. High flow oxygen was provided to assist his breathing. COVID-19 test was arranged by the hospital and the test result was preliminarily positive.

POH conducted infection control investigation according to the established mechanism after the patient being tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19. It was confirmed that the whole process of patient handling was appropriate. However, a patient care assistant and a radiographer had not worn appropriate personal protective equipment when changing clothes and taking X-ray imaging for the patient. They were classified as close contacts and will be quarantined in the quarantine centre for 14 days. POH had contacted the Centre for Health Protection for the incident. Staff members are reminded the importance of full compliance with the guidelines on appropriate personal protective equipment.

The patient has been transferred to the Intensive Care Unit of Princess Margaret Hospital earlier and is now in critical condition.

Hospital Authority Supports Universal Community Testing Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) spokesperson remarked today (August 31) that the HA supports the Government's Universal Community Testing Programme. The programme dovetails with the epidemic control policy of "early identification, early isolation and early treatment". The programme will help identify and eliminate the invisible transmission link in the community. By managing the epidemic, pressure of public hospitals can be alleviated and normal operation can be resumed as soon as possible.

In the Administrative and Operational Meeting held last Thursday (August 27), the HA Board noted and supported HA's measures in assisting the preparation of the Government's Universal Community Testing Programme. The HA has provided the equipment and manpower to conduct fit tests of surgical respirators for the programme staff and expedited the approval of HA healthcare staff in participating the specimen collection work in test centres.

The HA also encourages its staff to join the testing. Public hospitals will get prepared in terms of manpower and facilities in light of possible increase in confirmed patients. The HA spokesperson said that large scale community testing will also reduce staff and inpatient infection risks.

"With a few public hospitals having nosocomial infections due to occult patients, the HA agreed that large scale community testing programme together with various ongoing screening arrangements for high risk groups can reduce the infection risks of frontline staff and other patients in the hospitals."

"Since late July, the HA has arranged distribution of specimen packs for individuals who perceive themselves to have higher risk of exposure and experience mild discomfort, under the 'Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme' of the Department of Health. By far, over 40 000 people have collected the specimen packs and 62 have been tested positive for COVID-19, preventing further transmission in the community by these people," the spokesperson said.

"The Board Members agreed that Hong Kong has to control the epidemic as soon as possible to alleviate the pressure of public hospitals, so as to resume normal operation and provide the necessary healthcare services for the

community," the spokesperson added.

Latest situation of online appointments for Universal Community Testing Programme

As at 6pm today (August 31), about 553 000 people have successfully registered for the Universal Community Testing Programme (UCTP), to be launched tomorrow (September 1), since the online booking system commenced operation on August 29.

Ninety-seven community testing centres have been fully booked on September 1, the first day of the UCTP, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of all the 141 community testing centres. A list of these community centres is at Annex 1.

For the period between September 1 and 7, fourteen community testing centres have been fully booked. A list of these community centres is at Annex 2. As places are still available at other community testing centres, members of the public may consider signing up at other centres if their first choice is fully booked.

The UCTP aims at identifying asymptomatic COVID-19 patients, and to cut the transmission chain on the community. The Government has not set any target on the number of participants in the programme.

The Government will closely monitor the booking situation and the operation of the programme to consider whether to extend the programme for not more than seven days.

Second tranche of Employment Support Scheme receives over 54 000 applications on first day of application

A Government spokesman said today (August 31), that applications for the second tranche of the Employment Support Scheme (ESS) are open today for two

weeks. Up to 6pm today, nearly 52 000 applications from employers and over 2 000 applications from self-employed persons have been received. Among the employers' applications received today, 96 per cent of the employer applicants have successfully applied for the first tranche of the ESS.

The spokesman said, "We will expeditiously process all the applications received. Most eligible employers who have provided accurate and complete information are expected to receive wage subsidies in three to four weeks after submission of their application."

Upon completion of the processing of applications, the ESS Secretariat will inform successful applicants of the results via SMS and email. Applicants can log in to the ESS portal (www.ess.gov.hk) to check the amount of subsidy granted and the committed paid headcount for the months of September to November 2020.

Eligible employers and self-employed persons can submit online applications for the second tranche of wage subsidies through the ESS portal (www.ess.gov.hk) until 11.59pm on September 13 (Sunday).

The spokesman said, "Self-employed persons (SEPs) with 'MPF self-employed person' accounts which have not been terminated as of March 31 can also submit applications for the \$7,500 one-off lump sum subsidy during the application period for the second tranche of the ESS if they have not received the subsidy in the first tranche."

Interested employers and self-employed persons are advised to visit the ESS portal to obtain detailed information including details of eligibility, application procedures, calculation of subsidies, terms and conditions, undertakings and more.

For enquiries, please send an email to enquiry@employmentsupport.hk or call the ESS hotline (1836 122). The service hours of the hotline are as follows.

August 31 – September 9	9am to 6pm
September 10 – 12	9am to 8pm
September 13	9am to 0.30am of the following day

Applicants who need assistance in completing their online applications may call the ESS hotline to make appointments with the following three ESS Help Desks during the application period.

- North Point Help Desk at Room 1701, A T Tower, 180 Electric Road, North Point;
- Kwun Tong Help Desk at Room 2507, Prosperity Center, 25 Chong Yip Street, Kwun Tong; and
- Tsuen Wan Help Desk at Room 1206, Chinachem Tsuen Wan Plaza, 455 Castle Peak Road – Tsuen Wan.

The service hours of the ESS Help Desks are as follows.

August 31 – September 9	9am to 6pm
September 10 – 12	9am to 8pm
September 13	9am to 10pm

The service hours of the ESS hotline and the Help Desks will remain in service from Monday to Friday (9am to 6pm) to answer enquiries beyond the application period.