

## Tseung Kwan O Hospital announces the interruption of the negative pressure system in isolation rooms

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Tseung Kwan O Hospital made the following announcement today (August 3) regarding the interruption of the negative pressure system in two isolation rooms of Intensive Care Unit (ICU):

At around 1.50am today, the negative pressure system of two isolation rooms in ICU was interrupted and suspended one after another shortly. There was one patient with confirmed COVID-19 infection staying in each of the two isolation rooms at that time. The doors of the rooms concerned had been kept closed. Since it was anticipated that restoration would take some time, the two patients were transferred to other isolation rooms in accordance with established infection control contingency plan.

Staff from the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) found that the fuse of local motor control panel for the exhaust ventilation system of the concerned isolation rooms was broken due to rainwater seepage into the equipment enclosure of the said panel located at the roof of the building, which led to failure of the negative pressure system. At around 4.15am, the negative pressure system of both isolation rooms repaired by EMSD and resumed operation. The two affected isolation rooms have already resumed normal operation for patient use.

During the incident, all ward staff were equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment and no aerosol generating procedure was performed. The infection risk has been assessed to be very low.

The Hospital is highly concerned about the incident and has reported the case to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System. The Hospital has also requested EMSD to implement improvement measures to prevent similar incident from happening again.

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## Government extends social distancing measures

The Government announced today (August 3) that it would gazette directions and specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease

(Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) to extend the social distancing measures currently in place. The above directions and specifications will take effect at 0.00am on August 5 for a period of seven days till August 11.

The Government strongly urges the public to stay at home as much as possible, go out less often unless necessary, and avoid dining out and unnecessary social activities (including private gatherings), to fight the epidemic together without letting down one's guard, in order to reduce community transmission so as to cut the community transmission chain. Maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene at all times is key to the prevention of infection and the spread of the disease in the community, as well as to the alleviation of the enormous burden currently put on the healthcare system.

The epidemic situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong has continued to remain severe. The recent emergence of numerous local cases of unknown infection source indicates the existence of sustained silent transmission in the community. The latest public health risk assessment shows that the risk of a large-scale community outbreak is now the highest since the emergence of the epidemic in Hong Kong.

According to the World Health Organization and health experts, COVID-19 would not be eradicated without effective treatment and vaccination. The Government thus is required to incorporate work in relation to disease prevention and control as well as infection management into the new normal of the daily operation of the society. To this end, the Government has all along adopted the "suppress and lift" strategy in order to quickly adjust epidemic control measures having regard to the development of the epidemic situation. In view of the epidemic situation which has remained severe, the Government considers it necessary to extend the relevant social distancing measures.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "In view of the latest public health risk assessment, in particular the higher risks brought about by activities conducted without wearing masks as well as various social activities as shown in recent cases, we are of the view that, at present, it is necessary to extend social distancing measures implemented under Cap. 599F, Cap. 599G and Cap. 599I, including requiring the cessation of dine-in services at catering businesses during specific periods, continuing to require closure of scheduled premises, as well as requiring any person to wear mask at all times when entering or being present in any public place."

The requirements and restrictions under the latest directions (details at Annex 1) are as follows:

#### Catering business

- (1) From 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, save for specific premises

(details at Annex 2), a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business; and close any premises, or part of the premises, on which food or drink is sold or supplied by the business for consumption on the premises. The premises concerned may still sell or supply food and/or drink for takeaway services and deliveries. A person responsible for carrying on a catering business is also required to put up a notice at the entrance to the catering premises to remind customers that food or drink should not be consumed in areas adjacent to the catering premises.

(2) On catering business, the number of customers at any catering premises at any one time must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity of the premises. No more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises.

(3) Tables available for use or being used by customers within any catering premises must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or partition(s) which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table at the premises.

(4) Any premises (commonly known as bar or pub) that is exclusively or mainly used for the sale or supply of intoxicating liquors as defined in section 53(1) of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109) for consumption in that premises must be closed. Any part of a catering premises that is exclusively or mainly used for the sale or supply of such intoxicating liquors for consumption in that part must be closed.

(5) Live performance and dancing must not be allowed in any catering premises. All karaoke and mahjong-tin kau activities carried on at any catering premises must also be suspended. Other requirements and restrictions in relation to catering business premises would remain in effect, including wearing a mask at all times within any catering premises except when the person is consuming food or drink; conducting body temperature screening for all persons entering the premises; and providing hand sanitisers.

#### Scheduled premises

(6) All scheduled premises under Cap. 599F as set out below are required to suspend operation:

- (a) Amusement game centres;
- (b) Bathhouses;
- (c) Fitness centres;
- (d) Places of amusement;
- (e) Places of public entertainment;
- (f) Premises (commonly known as party rooms) that are maintained or intended to be maintained for hire for holding social gatherings;
- (g) Beauty parlours;
- (h) Establishments (commonly known as clubs or nightclubs) that are open late into the night, usually for drinking, and dancing or other entertainment;
- (i) Karaoke establishments;

- (j) Mahjong-tin kau premises;
- (k) Massage establishments (save for those set out in Annex 3);
- (l) Sports premises; and
- (m) Swimming pools.

(7) Save for catering premises therein, all club-houses must be closed. Catering premises in club-houses must follow the directions set out for catering premises, including the requirement to cease dine-in services during specific periods.

In view of the higher infection risks involved in eating without wearing a mask, the Government calls on the persons responsible for carrying on catering business to strictly abide by the above measures and to take further measures, such as arranging single-direction seating as far as practicable to avoid face-to-face contact and refraining from table-sharing arrangements to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus.

Persons responsible for carrying on catering businesses, persons making available seating and tables adjacent to catering business premises and managers of scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under Cap. 599F would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

#### Group gathering

(8) Unless exempted, the prohibition on group gatherings of more than two persons in public places will continue during the aforementioned seven-day period.

Any person who participates in a prohibited group gathering; organises a prohibited group gathering; owns, controls or operates the place of such gathering and knowingly allows the taking place of such gathering, commits an offence under Cap. 599G. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who participate in a prohibited group gathering may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty of \$2,000.

#### Mask-wearing requirement

(9) The Secretary for Food and Health will, by way of a notice published in the Gazette under Cap. 599I, continue to specify all public places so as to maintain the existing mask-wearing requirement, i.e. during the aforementioned seven-day period, a person must wear a mask at all times when the person is boarding or onboard a public transport carrier, is entering or present in an MTR paid area, or is entering or present in a public place (indoor or outdoor).

Under Cap. 599I, if a person does not wear a mask in accordance with the requirement, an authorised person may deny that person from boarding a public transport carrier or entering the area concerned, as well as require that

person to wear a mask and disembark from the carrier or leave the said area. A person in contravention of the relevant provision commits an offence and the maximum penalty is a fine at level 2 (\$5,000). In addition, authorised public officers may issue fixed penalty notices to persons who do not wear a mask in accordance with the requirement and such persons may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty of \$2,000.

"We will also continue to closely monitor the development of the epidemic situation and review the various measures in place from time to time with a view to making suitable adjustments taking into account all relevant factors," said the spokesman.

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## **Relief security guard of outsourced agency of Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat tests positive for COVID-19**

The Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat today (August 3) learned that a relief security guard of its outsourced agency has tested positive for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The relief security guard works at the Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat on 17/F, Pioneer Centre, 750 Nathan Road, Mongkok for security duties. He last performed duties in the office on July 30 and has no recent travel history. He had been wearing masks when performing duties and had strictly complied with the various disease preventive measures implemented by the Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat. A family member of the relief security guard was confirmed as having COVID-19 on August 1, so he was arranged to undergo testing for the virus and was notified by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) today of the positive test result.

In accordance with the special work arrangements of the Government, the Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat has suspended all counter services and interview appointments since July 20. The Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat, including its common areas, has been fully cleaned and sterilised in accordance with the guidelines of the CHP. For enquiries on the Cash Payout Scheme, members of the public may contact the Secretariat via email ([enquiry@cashpayout.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@cashpayout.gov.hk)) or leave a message at the telephone recording system of the hotline 3106 0740 which will be answered as soon as practicable.

During the pandemic, the Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat has been strictly implementing various disease prevention measures, including

measuring the body temperature of people entering the office, providing masks and other personal protective equipment for staff, requesting staff to wear masks when in the office, and stepping up cleaning and sterilising measures for the workplace.

The Cash Payout Scheme Secretariat will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP. Staff have been reminded to pay attention to personal hygiene and to stay vigilant. They should seek medical advice and inform the Secretariat as soon as possible if feeling unwell.

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## SED on class resumption and kindergarten operation

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session at the Central Government Offices today (August 3):

Reporter: A few questions from RTHK. Can we say that this face-to-face class suspension is now indefinite for the time being? And what would you consider when you resume this face-to-face teaching? Would it be in stages as you said in Chinese? And the second question concerns kindergartens, because a large number of kindergarten students may actually drop out of the schools, so do you foresee many kindergartens are closing down from now on? And thirdly, about the Primary Six examination for secondary school admission, what would be the possible arrangement if schools are going to be suspended for quite a long time. Thank you.

Secretary for Education: At this stage, because of the uncertain development of COVID-19 epidemic, it is really difficult to say when normal face-to-face lectures or tutoring or teaching will be allowed. We will closely monitor the development of the epidemic and will give sufficient notice to schools when we think it is appropriate or it is safe for schools to resume the normal face-to-face lectures.

For kindergartens, of course it is also under the same arrangement that there would not be any face-to-face lessons at present. We also encourage kindergartens to arrange some work for the students to do at home, and maybe through some reading or some very simple worksheets, so that teaching and learning will still take place at home. By doing that, I hope parents will see the values of that and will continue to engage their children in kindergarten education. But we will of course closely monitor the whole situation. In the past few months, we have heard there were kindergartens facing great difficulties, so we have implemented a number of relief measures and packages to help them get through. So far we did not see very significant increase in terms of the kindergartens closing down in the past few months.

But of course as I said, we will closely monitor the situation. If the Government has to implement other measures to help the whole community as well as different sectors, we will of course consider the impact on the kindergartens and see whether any further relief measures will be necessary.

We are still discussing with the primary schools. On the arrangement for Primary Six examination, as you know, we had deferred the submission of Primary Five examination results to middle of September and further extend to October. At this stage, it is still too early to say what will happen. We still hope that we could have normal classes to resume as soon as possible. But we are making contingency plans. We have already been in discussions with the primary school sector on possible contingency arrangements. But at this stage, we are still discussing with them. We know that it is a very important examination because it involves the future or the allocation of Secondary One places to students. We will look at it carefully and will try to make sure that the system would maintain as fair and efficient as possible.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## **Suspension of agreement on surrender of fugitive offenders and agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between Hong Kong and New Zealand**

In accordance with the instruction of the Central People's Government (CPG), the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has issued a notice to the New Zealand Consulate-General today (August 3) to suspend the implementation of the Agreement for the Surrender of Accused and Convicted Persons between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand and the Agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand Concerning Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLA).

A Government spokesman said, "It is an international practice to safeguard national security through enactment of laws. New Zealand has put in place relevant legislation and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding its national security and sovereignty, such as the Intelligence and Security Act and the Crimes Act 1961.

"However, New Zealand has unilaterally suspended the agreement on surrender of fugitive offenders (SF0) with the HKSAR using the enactment of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security

in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as an excuse. The move by New Zealand smacks of political manipulation and double standards. It is also gross interference in China's internal affairs and a grave violation of international law and basic norms governing international relations. The HKSAR Government strongly objects to New Zealand's move. It has politicised juridical co-operation, thereby seriously damaging the basis of juridical co-operation between the HKSAR and New Zealand. For this reason, in accordance with the instruction of the CPG, the HKSAR Government has suspended the implementation of the SFO agreement and the MLA agreement between the HKSAR and New Zealand."

All along, with the authorisation and assistance of the CPG, the HKSAR Government has conducted close and effective law enforcement co-operation with New Zealand under the legal framework of SFO and MLA agreements based on the principle of mutual assistance and reciprocity. Notwithstanding the suspension of the Agreement for the Surrender of Accused and Convicted Persons between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand and the Agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Government of New Zealand Concerning MLA, the HKSAR has established a comprehensive co-operation regime for the surrender of fugitives and mutual legal assistance. The HKSAR Government will, as always, uphold the principle of mutual assistance and reciprocity, and carry out law enforcement co-operation with other members of the international community in accordance with the law.