

CHP investigates 14 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (June 25), the CHP was investigating 14 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 194 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 193 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve nine males and five females aged between two and 39. All of them had travel history during the incubation period. 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.

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. 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.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a 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, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and 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."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be

able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

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 performing 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 doorknobs, 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) 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.

Ineligible applicants being notified of result of application for one-off lump-sum subsidy under Employment Support Scheme

A Government spokesman said today (June 25) that the Employment Support Scheme (ESS) received a total of 259 860 applications for the one-off lump-sum subsidy of \$7,500 for self-employed persons (SEPs) during the application period. Of these, about 140 000 applications have not been approved due to ineligibility. The ESS Secretariat or the processing agent are sending notifications to these applicants.

Under the ESS, the applicant must have enrolled himself or herself in a Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Scheme as an SEP and the relevant SEP MPF account should have been set up on or before March 31, 2020 (i.e. it cannot be backdated to that date or any earlier date) and had not been terminated as of March 31, 2020. According to the information provided by the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority, there are about 215 000 SEPs who are eligible for the one-off lump-sum subsidy.

"Applications for one-off lump-sum subsidy are denied mostly because they were based on an employee MPF account or a personal account created after termination of previous self-employment instead of a dedicated SEP MPF account, or the relevant SEP MPF accounts had already been terminated as of March 31, 2020. Should there be any enquiries about the application results, applicants may send email to subsidy@employmentsupport.hk within 14 days from the date of receipt of the notification from the ESS secretariat or the processing agent. " the spokesman said.

The ESS Secretariat has completed processing about 74 000 applications for one-off lump-sum subsidy and notified successful SEP applicants. The total sum involved is about 560 million. We are expeditiously processing some 40 000 remaining applications.

Protestors unlawfully gathered at YOH0 Mall in Yuen Long

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

At about 2pm today (June 25), some protestors unlawfully gathered at YOH0 Mall in Yuen Long, causing nuisance to shoppers and resulting in closure of shops. Police therefore entered the mall to take enforcement actions.

Police are now conducting dispersal and arrest action therein. Police warn the protestors inside the mall to stop all illegal acts. Police will continue to take resolute enforcement action.

Government to begin distributing 30 million locally-produced masks to the public free-of-charge starting next Tuesday

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau announced today (June 25) that the Government will begin to deliver masks free-of-charge to all residential addresses in Hong Kong through Hongkong Post starting next Tuesday (June 30). Each household will receive a pack of ten disposable adult masks. The masks that will be distributed are the first batch procured by the Government under the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme. The Government wishes to share these masks with the public and fight the virus together.

At present, Hongkong Post's delivery service covers approximately 2.88 million residential addresses in Hong Kong. Hongkong Post will begin to deliver masks to these addresses from June 30 onwards. To make the delivery process simple for the public, there is no need for any pre-registration.

The postman will directly insert a pack of ten masks (measuring 230 millimetres by 135 millimetres) into an adequately-sized residential letter box. If the pack cannot be inserted into the letter box, the postman will attempt door delivery. If no one is at home, the postman will leave a notification card. With the notification card, the pack of masks can be collected at the designated post office within 28 working days. Details of the delivery process are set out in Hongkong Post's short clip (<https://youtu.be/ple0jkbQkcU>).

As for the small number of residential households not currently covered by Hongkong Post's delivery service, alternative delivery arrangements will be made, which include assistance provided by the Social Welfare Department and the District Offices.

Hongkong Post will suitably arrange for additional manpower for the distribution exercise, which will take approximately three weeks to complete. As such, the public will receive their masks at different times.

For enquiries about the mask distribution exercise, please call the dedicated hotline 183 6136 or email to enquiry@maskdistribution.hk starting from 9am tomorrow (June 26).

The Government launched the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund to provide financial assistance to 20 local mask production lines. The Government estimates that when all the 20 subsidised lines are in full production, every month they will collectively supply about 34 million masks to the Government and about 7.6 million masks to the local market.



Increase in maximum rent allowance under CSSA Scheme and upward adjustment of income limits for OALA

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) announced today (June 25) that an increase in the maximum rent allowance (MRA) under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and an upward adjustment of the income limits for Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) (including OALA under the Guangdong (GD) Scheme and Fujian (FJ) Scheme) under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme will take effect from July 1, 2020.

A SWD spokesman said that "The Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address" announced a series of measures to improve the CSSA including the measure to increase the MRA significantly on a one-off basis. The Legislative Council Finance Committee approved the relevant proposals on May 29, 2020. Meanwhile, the income limits for OALA (including OALA under the GD Scheme and FJ Scheme) under the SSA Scheme will be revised correspondingly from July 1. The adjusted MRA under CSSA and income limits for OALA are at Annex.

CSSA and SSA applicants and recipients may call the SWD hotline at 2343 2255, or contact their respective social security field units for enquiries, or visit the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk).