

CHP investigates two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 22), the CHP was investigating two additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 066 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 065 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve one male and one female aged 15 and 61 respectively. They 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 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 infection through contact with 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 if 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."

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

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 120 207 calls had been 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 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 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 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 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
- If 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.

LegCo House Committee elects Deputy Chairman

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council House Committee held a meeting today (May 22) and Mr Ma Fung-kwok was elected as the Deputy Chairman for the 2019-2020 session.

Secondary 3 to 5 students to resume classes next Wednesday

All secondary schools are preparing a healthy and safe environment for Secondary 3 to Secondary 5 students to resume classes next Wednesday (May 27), including adjusting teaching arrangements and strengthening precautionary measures against COVID-19.

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, this afternoon (May 22) visited Lok Sin Tong Leung Kau Kui College in Sai Ying Pun, where he was briefed by its Vice Supervisor, Mr Chan Kin-ping, and Principal, Mr Lo Man-piu, on the preparation work for the class resumption.

Mr Yeung learned that the school, like others, has stepped up its cleanliness and disinfection. When classes resume, the school will operate on a half-day basis to avoid the risk of meal gatherings. All teachers and students, upon their arrival at school, must wear masks, sanitise their hands, have their body temperature checked and make a health declaration.

In the classroom, the school has made the best use of space to arrange students to sit in single rows in a "face-to-back" setting. Teachers will avoid group discussion activities so as to minimise close contacts among students. Students will also be required to maintain an appropriate social distance from one another during recess and when queuing for toilets and tuck shops.

According to the planned schedule, classes of Secondary 3 to Secondary 5 will resume on May 27, Primary 4 to Secondary 2 on June 8, and Kindergarten 3 to Primary 3 on June 15.

Mr Yeung said, "Since the announcement on class resumption was made in early May, there have been sporadic local confirmed cases in Hong Kong. But following a prudent assessment on the epidemic situation in consultation with medical experts, the Education Bureau (EDB) considers that the class resumption plan could proceed as scheduled."

He stressed that the local epidemic situation could be volatile and that everyone must continue to stay vigilant. While appealing to members of the public to maintain good personal and environmental hygiene, he pledged that the EDB would keep a close eye on the epidemic situation and would make timely announcements in case contingency measures are needed. He hoped that all school stakeholders and students could understand and cooperate with the EDB in due course.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (May 22) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay, see Note 2).

Thirty beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and nine as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Lo So Shing Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Lower Cheung Sha Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach*	Pui O Beach*
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach*
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Shek O Beach*
Clear Water Bay Second Beach*	Silver Mine Bay Beach*
Deep Water Bay Beach*	Silverstrand Beach
Discovery Bay	South Bay Beach
Golden Beach*	St Stephen's Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach*	Stanley Main Beach*
Hung Shing Yeh Beach*	Tong Fuk Beach
Kadoorie Beach	Trio Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Approach Beach	Lido Beach*
Butterfly Beach*	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach*
Casam Beach*	Ting Kau Beach
Castle Peak Beach	

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the

EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note 1: The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced on May 19 that 15 gazetted beaches (marked with an asterisk * above) would be reopened on May 23. All other beaches will remain temporarily closed until further notice.

Note 2: Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

Amendment regulation to phase out Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles gazetted

The Air Pollution Control (Air Pollutant Emission) (Controlled Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2020 to phase out Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles was gazetted today (May 22).

A spokesman for the Environmental Protection Department said that the Amendment Regulation aims take forward a new incentive-cum-regulatory programme to progressively phase out by the end of 2027 some 40,000 existing Euro IV diesel commercial vehicles (DCVs) including diesel goods vehicles, non-franchised buses and light buses, with a view to further improving roadside air quality. These vehicles were first registered within the period specified in Annex A. Under the programme, the Government will offer eligible vehicle owners ex-gratia payment ranging from 31 per cent to 37 per cent of the average taxable value of a comparable new vehicle, having regard to the age of the vehicles concerned, and an extra 15 per cent subsidy based on average vehicle body prices for goods vehicles assembled with vehicular additions.

"The Amendment Regulation will stipulate retirement deadlines for Euro IV DCVs (see Annex B) with reference to their respective dates of first registration," the spokesman said.

"The Amendment Regulation requires the owners of the vehicles concerned to, on each application for a vehicle licence from the respective retirement deadlines as the case may be, comply with the emission standards applicable to them as if they were first registered on the date of the vehicle licence application. Failure to comply with the requirement may be grounds for the Commissioner for Transport to refuse to grant the vehicle licence. Furthermore, some DCVs, which were first registered on a date within the period as specified in Annex A but on the date of first registration had complied with the Euro V emission standards, will be excluded from the phasing out Euro IV DCVs programme and will not be categorised as controlled vehicles under the Amendment Regulation," the spokesman added.

The Amendment Regulation will be tabled in the Legislative Council for negative vetting on May 27. Subject to the approval of the Council, the Amendment Regulation will take effect on September 1, 2020.