

## Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (April 29), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 18 patients (eight male and 10 female, aged five months to 88 years) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 231 patients under isolation currently. So far, 830 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infections have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

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## Red tides sighted

Two red tides have been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (April 29).

The first red tide was spotted by staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on April 26 at Hoi Ha Wan. The second red tide was spotted by a member of the public at Long Harbour including the Sham Wan fish culture zone on the same day. Both red tides still persist.

No associated death of fish has been reported so far in both red tides.

A spokesman for the working group said, "Both red tides were formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters and is non-toxic."

The AFCD urged mariculturists at the Tap Mun, Kau Lau Wan and Sham Wan fish culture zones to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.

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## **Official Receiver's Office resumes normal services starting from May 4**

To align with the announcement by the Government yesterday (April 28) to resume public services under a phased approach starting from May 4, the Official Receiver's Office (ORO) announced today (April 29) that it will resume normal services from May 4 while maintaining a high degree of vigilance and adopting all necessary precautionary measures.

All offices of the ORO will be open from 8.30am to 5.45pm from Monday to Friday. For details on the office hours of specific public services, please visit the ORO's website at [www.oro.gov.hk/eng/contactus/officehrs.htm](http://www.oro.gov.hk/eng/contactus/officehrs.htm).

To achieve social distancing with a view to reducing the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the community, members of the public are encouraged to avoid coming to the offices of the ORO as far as possible. For the delivery of documents to ORO, the public may make use of the ORO designated drop box on the Deck Floor of Queensway Government Offices. They can also make use of the electronic services of the ORO and contact the ORO by:

- (a) telephone (hotline number: 2867 2448);
- (b) email ([oroadmin@oro.gov.hk](mailto:oroadmin@oro.gov.hk)); or
- (c) fax (fax number: 3105 1814).

As for the meetings of creditors, meetings of contributories and adjournment thereof, creditors and contributories are recommended to lodge their proxies with the ORO by way of fax at 3105 1814 and avoid attending the meetings in person. The proxy forms can be accessed at the ORO's website ([www.oro.gov.hk/eng/pforms/pforms.htm](http://www.oro.gov.hk/eng/pforms/pforms.htm)). Members of the public are also encouraged not to attend such meetings unless it is absolutely necessary.

For any enquiries, please contact the ORO through its hotline at 2867 2448.

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## **Residential mortgage loans in negative equity: End of March 2020**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced today (April 29) the results of its survey on residential mortgage loans (RMLs) in negative equity at end-March 2020.

The estimated number of RMLs in negative equity increased to 384 cases at end-March 2020 from 128 cases at end-December 2019. These cases were related to bank staff housing loans or RMLs under mortgage insurance programme, which generally have a higher loan-to-value ratio.

The aggregate value of RMLs in negative equity increased to HK\$1,867 million at end-March 2020 compared with HK\$764 million at end-December 2019.

The unsecured portion of these loans increased to HK\$81 million at end-March 2020 from HK\$25 million at end-December 2019.

Since the first quarter of 2011, there have been no RMLs in negative equity with delinquencies of more than three months.

It is important to note that the figures derived from this survey relate only to RMLs provided by authorized institutions on the basis of first mortgages and which the reporting institution knows to be in negative equity (i.e. the outstanding loan amount with the reporting institution exceeds the current market value of the mortgaged property). Not included in these figures are RMLs associated with co-financing schemes which would be in negative equity if the second mortgages were taken into account. The extent to which such RMLs are in negative equity is not known because authorized institutions do not maintain records on the outstanding balances of the second mortgages.

The mortgage portfolios of the surveyed authorized institutions represent about 99 per cent of the industry total. The survey results have been extrapolated to estimate the position of the banking sector as a whole.

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## **Resumption of normal service for Independent Checking Unit and Appeal Panel (Housing)**

To tie in with the Government's announcement that resumption of normal operation hours for its public services will commence on May 4 while maintaining a high degree of vigilance and adopting all necessary precautionary measures, a spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said today (April 29) that the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) under the Office of the Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) will resume

normal services starting from May 4. Its receipt counter and general enquiry counter at 8/F, Lung Cheung Office Block, Lung Cheung Road, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon, will be reopened to provide services including inspection and copying services for Hong Kong Housing Authority building records and receipt of building control applications and documents as well as handling of public enquiries.

The ICU will limit the number of service users at any one time in order to achieve social distancing. As an infection control measure, all members of the public entering the office of the ICU are required to wear masks and undergo body temperature checks.

Furthermore, the Appeal Panel (Housing) will resume hearings on terminations of tenancy agreements from mid-May. The Secretariat will inform the parties concerned accordingly starting from May 4.