

Clarification regarding the Government's stock of face masks

In response to media enquiries today (January 26), citing sources suggesting that the Government had mass production of face masks and has maintained a stock of up to 100 million, a Government spokesman said that this information is unfounded, and clarified as follows:

The Government Logistics Department (GLD) maintains and supplies surgical masks to various government departments for their operational and contingency use. In 2019, the GLD procured a monthly average of 1.1 million masks from the Correctional Services Department (i.e. the monthly production by the Department) and issued almost the same number of quantity to departments.

To support the operational use of relevant bureaux and departments under the preparedness and response plans for infectious diseases, the GLD is required to maintain a stock of 10 million masks. Owing to the novel coronavirus infection, concerned bureaux and departments had drawn the masks from the GLD's stock in the previous week for use by their front-line staff. The GLD has procured additional masks for stock replenishment so as to ensure sufficient stock for use by the bureaux and departments.

Regarding the production date of the masks in stock, according to records, the earliest date is January 2019.