

Epidemic prevention work at Chung Ying Street

A Government spokesman said today (February 27) that under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), "the category of persons verified to be Hong Kong residents living in the Mainland side of Sha Tau Kok" have been exempted from compulsory quarantine requirements when entering Sha Tau Kok Frontier Closed Area (FCA) through Chung Ying Street, on the conditions that the persons concerned have not been to other places in the Mainland other than the Sha Tau Kok Mainland Closed Area in the past 14 days, and that they also need to undergo medical surveillance for a period of 14 days.

Hong Kong residents of Sha Tau Kok must first submit proofs of identification and residence to the North District Office for verifying their resident status in order to be exempted from the relevant quarantine requirements when entering Hong Kong through Chung Ying Street. The spokesman stressed that if these persons enter Hong Kong from the Mainland through other immigration control points or have stayed in other places in the Mainland during the 14 days before, they must be subject to the 14-day compulsory quarantine.

To facilitate epidemic prevention work, starting from yesterday (February 26), the Government has stepped up access control at Chung Ying Street located in Sha Tau Kok FCA. Hong Kong residents living in the Sha Tau Kok Mainland Closed Area must undergo medical surveillance when they enter the Hong Kong FCA through Chung Ying Street, i.e. they must wear a surgical mask when going out and measure their body temperature on a daily basis, and call the Department of Health (DH)'s hotline to report if they feel unwell. All persons entering Hong Kong through the Mainland Closed Area of Chung Ying Street must have their temperature checked by DH personnel stationed there.

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The spokesman explained that the Government, in formulating the relevant measures, has taken into account the exceptional circumstances of Chung Ying Street being located within a closed area and the daily needs of local residents. At present, Hong Kong residents living in the Sha Tau Kok Mainland Closed Area cannot leave that closed area and enter other places in the Mainland due to the Mainland's epidemic control. They can only enter Hong Kong through Chung Ying Street. The basic supplies and services in the Sha Tau Kok Mainland Closed Area are limited, with many stores closed due to the epidemic. Thus, these Hong Kong residents have to enter Hong Kong through Chung Ying Street to meet their daily needs. Residents must submit proofs of identification and residence in order to be exempted from the compulsory quarantine. The North District Office, the Police and the DH have deployed personnel at the Chung Ying Street checkpoint to implement the measures and explain the required procedures and arrangements to the residents.

Due to its unique historical background and geographical factors, Chung Ying Street is not an immigration control point. There is no physical barrier

in Chung Ying Street as demarcation between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and there is no boundary control facility. No personnel of the Immigration Department are stationed there. Only Police checkpoints are set up administratively to allow holders of valid closed area permits (CAP) to pass through. Geographically, Chung Ying Street connects both the FCA of Hong Kong and the Mainland. The Mainland government has been imposing strict access controls on the closed area, barring entry of Mainland persons unless with permits. The Mainland Closed Area of Chung Ying Street is geographically separated from other places in the Mainland by the Sha Tau Kok River.

In addition, the Police have tightened the arrangements for CAP holders to enter Chung Ying Street. Only Hong Kong residents who live or work in the Hong Kong area on Chung Ying Street and those who live in the Mainland Closed Area adjacent to Chung Ying Street are allowed to enter Chung Ying Street.

After announcement of the Regulation, the Working Group Against Epidemic in Sha Tau Kok, which is comprised of representatives from the Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee and Sha Tau Kok residents as well as the relevant District Council members, has reflected their views to the North District Office and the Border District of Police that over the past decades, the daily lives of local residents have spanned across the boundary between the Hong Kong and the Mainland closed areas adjacent to Chung Ying Street. The scope of these residents' activities in the Mainland is currently limited to the closed area adjacent to Chung Ying Street, as their access to other places in the Mainland is not allowed. At present, supplies in the Mainland Closed Area are limited, and most stores are already closed. Therefore, these residents have genuine needs to enter Hong Kong through Chung Ying Street, and the 14-day compulsory quarantine will make it difficult to maintain their living. The Security Bureau, the Home Affairs Bureau and the Food and Health Bureau have given careful considerations to the exceptional circumstances and health risk assessments of Chung Ying Street as well as the genuine needs of these residents to enter Hong Kong through Chung Ying Street to meet their daily needs. Having regard to the above considerations as well as the public health perspective, it is considered an appropriate epidemic preventive measure for these residents to undergo medical surveillance after entering Hong Kong.