

Government issues Red Outbound Travel Alert on Ireland, United Kingdom and United States

In view of the health risks arising from the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government today (March 15) has decided to issue the Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on the aforesaid countries based on public health considerations.

The Red OTA urges members of the public planning to travel to the aforementioned countries to adjust travel plans and avoid non-essential travel. In general, members of the public are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

For those who are already in the aforementioned countries, they should:

- pay attention to announcements by local authorities;
- put on a surgical mask all the time;
- avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities and crowded places;
- avoid close contact with persons with a fever or respiratory symptoms;
- wear a surgical mask and inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once if experiencing a fever or cough; and
- 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.

If it is unavoidable to travel to the aforementioned countries, the public should pay close attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 and the corresponding travel health advice issued by the Department of Health (DH). If assistance is needed, they may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at (852) 1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in the respective countries at their consular protection hotline listed below:

Country	Consular Protection Hotline
Ireland	(353) 87-2239198
United Kingdom	(44) 20-74368294 / 20-76311430
United States	(202) 495-2216

After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease until 14 days after returning to Hong

Kong.

The Food and Health Bureau will closely monitor the situation. Any updates will be issued through the media, the Government's "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html), the DH's webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv) and the Security Bureau's OTA webpage (www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota). Any enquiries on health information on COVID-19 may be addressed to the DH's hotline at (852) 2125 1122 (operating daily from 8am to midnight).

In addition, Hong Kong residents are encouraged to use the online Registration of Outbound Travel Information service (www.gov.hk/roti) to register their contact details and itinerary when outside Hong Kong. The information provided allows the DH and AHU of the ImmD to disseminate practical information to them through appropriate means including SMS on mobile phones, on a timely basis when necessary.

Apart from the aforementioned countries, the Government also issued the Red OTA on certain European countries (Schengen Area), Korea, as well as Hokkaido in Japan, and alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated health risks in Egypt and Iran under the Red OTA currently in force, in light of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in these countries/regions.