

Government maintains boarding restrictions for places with severe epidemic situation and compulsory quarantine arrangements

The Government announced today (January 23) that in view of the developments of the global COVID-19 epidemic situation, it is necessary to maintain the measure under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to restrict persons who have stayed in the extremely high-risk Group A specified places from boarding flights for Hong Kong, as well as the 21-day compulsory quarantine requirement under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) and Cap. 599H for persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in places outside China.

Due to the emergence of different new virus variants in Brazil, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom (i.e. Group A specified places) which may be much more transmissible according to experts' preliminary assessment, and in view of their already prevalent spread in those places, as a precautionary measure, the Government had gazetted the relevant specification that any person who has stayed in Group A specified places for more than two hours on the day of boarding or during the 21 days before that day are not allowed to board for Hong Kong.

A Government spokesman reiterated, "The Government recognises that maintaining the above stringent requirement may inevitably affect the return journey of a number of Hong Kong residents in these places. However, as the new virus variants are more transmissible, and the epidemic situation in the four places mentioned above remain severe, it is necessary for the Government to firmly guard against the importation of COVID-19 cases in order to protect the well-being of Hong Kong residents."

For better understanding by the public of the boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements under the relevant regulations for persons that have stayed in different places outside China, the Government has categorised the relevant risk-based boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for the relevant specified places into three groups.

Apart from the boarding restrictions for the extremely high-risk Group A specified places as mentioned above, for the very high-risk Group B specified places and the medium to high-risk Group C specified places, as the global epidemic situation remains severe, the Government also considers that the current boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for the relevant places should continue. All persons arriving at Hong Kong (either via the

airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival in Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. For persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in Group B specified places, they also have to present proof of a negative result of a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft. Details on the grouping of specified places and their respective boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html.

The spokesman said, "The Government will continue to closely monitor the developments of the global and local epidemic situation, including the extent and pattern of the spread of the disease in a certain place, and will frequently review the epidemic prevention and control requirements for persons returning to Hong Kong from different parts of the world, and adjust them as needed."