

Government's guidelines on distributing protective gears

In response to media enquiries about the guidelines on distributing protective gears within the government, a spokesman for the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau gave the following reply yesterday (February 16):

As the situation of novel coronavirus infection developed, the demand for protective gears such as masks and isolation gowns has drastically increased in recent days. Facing a worldwide shortage of masks, the Government Logistics Department (GLD) has already adopted a multi-pronged approach and stepped up its efforts in global sourcing to meet the government's operational requirements.

The GLD has at present a stock of about 12 million masks. Together with the stock kept by individual departments and production by the Correctional Services Department, the current total stock can last for only about two months.

It must be pointed out that all government departments have worked very hard to keep their demands for masks to a minimum and the total demand has been reduced to about 8 million masks per month, the majority of which are used for tackling and preventing the novel coronavirus infection. These include demand from medical and port health staff of the Department of Health and the staff from other government departments providing essential and emergency services. Taking the Police Force as an example, police officers have very often been deployed at the frontline to tackle the novel coronavirus infection together with other government departments, including stationing at quarantine centres and boundary control points to help with quarantine duties, as well as conducting spot checks on people under compulsory quarantine. The provision of masks to government officers who perform these duties is in compliance with the current guidelines on distribution of protective gears within the government.

The GLD will comply strictly with the distribution guidelines and accord priority to frontline staff participating in quarantine-related work, execution of quarantine orders and maintenance of essential public services.