

Implementation of special COVID-19 testing arrangement for outbound travellers to Mainland by air

â€œIn the light of the ongoing severe COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong and the fact that the number of cases remains at a high level, the Government announced today (March 26) the implementation of a special COVID-19 testing arrangement starting March 29 at the Hong Kong International Airport, in order to further prevent the exportation of local cases and to support the Mainland's anti-epidemic efforts. Before travellers can check in for flights to the Mainland, they will be subject to an additional rapid polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based nucleic acid test. The Government advised relevant travellers to allow ample time for their trips.

From March 29, persons travelling to the Mainland and Macao via the Hong Kong International Airport are required to hold a negative result of the additional rapid nucleic acid test when they check in for the flights. The additional rapid nucleic acid test must be conducted at the designated testing venue at the airport within eight hours prior to the scheduled departure time of the aircraft. However, the result of this special test cannot replace the proof of negative result of any self-paid nucleic acid test as currently required by relevant authorities of the Mainland and Macao.

The Government will arrange a testing institution to provide the aforementioned special testing service for free 24 hours daily. Persons travelling to the Mainland and Macao via the Hong Kong International Airport should reserve the testing service via the website of the relevant testing institution. Details can be found on following webpage www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/special-outbound-test.html.

A Government spokesman said, "The process of the rapid PCR-based nucleic acid test will take about two to three hours. Currently, the check-in process by airline companies generally begin two to three hours prior to the scheduled time of departure. In order to ensure that relevant outbound travellers will have sufficient time to complete the check-in and clearance procedures after obtaining a negative test result, they should allow ample time for travelling to the airport and arrive at least five to six hours prior to the scheduled time of departure to undergo the test by following the instructions by the staff on site to avoid any delay to their journeys."

Separately, the Government has been providing an additional rapid PCR-based nucleic acid test for outbound travellers at land boundary control points (BCPs) (i.e. Shenzhen Bay Port or the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port) since March 21. Only those who receive a negative result can continue with their journeys. The Government provides the aforementioned special testing service for free at the relevant control points from one hour before the opening of the passenger clearance buildings till one hour before the closure of the passenger clearance buildings. The current operating hours

of passenger clearance at the Shenzhen Bay and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge control points are from 10am to 6pm and from 10am to 8pm respectively. The spokesman reminded relevant travellers that the process of the rapid PCR-based nucleic acid test will take about one to two hours, and relevant travellers should pay attention to the opening hours of the passenger clearance buildings as well as the operating hours of the chosen transportation. They should arrive at the BCPs at least two hours in advance so that they will have sufficient time to complete their clearance procedures after obtaining a negative test result, for continuing with the journey as planned.

The spokesman reminded relevant travellers that they would still be subject to the quarantine and testing arrangements of their destinations. The relevant persons should take note of the latest quarantine requirements of relevant Mainland and Macao authorities, and make necessary preparations.