

Inter-departmental exercise held at airport in small hours today to test capacity in handling increasing passenger flow (with photos)

Since August 12, the quarantine arrangement for inbound persons from overseas places or Taiwan has been adjusted to three days of compulsory quarantine, followed by four days of medical surveillance. An increase in inbound passenger flow at the airport was noted subsequently as expected. To get well-prepared, the Government conducted an inter-departmental exercise at the airport in small hours today (September 1) to test whether any potential further increase in passenger flow could be handled effectively with the current procedures.

The exercise conducted in small hours was led by the Health Bureau and the Security Bureau. Co-ordinated by the Hong Kong Police Force, various departments and organisation, namely the Department of Health, the Hong Kong Customs, the Immigration Department and the Airport Authority, took part in the exercise. Over a thousand of staff members were enlisted to perform different duties as well as to simulate a situation in which one thousand inbound travellers arrived at Hong Kong within half an hour, with a view to examining the handling capacity of current quarantine and testing procedures.

To better reflect actual situations, different scenarios were simulated during the exercise, including having "travellers" of different age groups, "travellers tested positive" or "travellers whose documents are not in order" and more. The exercise was conducted smoothly. Even though the simulated traveller flow was almost a double of that of current peak hours, the "travellers" could still complete all inbound quarantine and clearance procedures within a similar timeframe.

Indeed, the streamlined arrival quarantine and testing procedures have been running smoothly in general since its implementation some two weeks ago. At present, the time needed for travellers to complete their inbound quarantine, testing and clearance procedures has been significantly reduced. Travellers are able to board the point-to-point transportation and depart from the airport for designated quarantine hotels within one to two hours after disembarking from the planes.

Under the science-based principle, the Government will continue to ensure that the imported risks are under control with precise measures in place while enhancing the inbound quarantine procedures as far as practicable, so as to assist inbound persons and create the most favourable conditions for Hong Kong to resume normal connections with different parts of the world.

