

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (March 29), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 204 patients (101 male and 103 female, aged 18 months to 99 years) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 540 patients under isolation currently. So far, 118 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infections have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Liquor Licensing Board meeting on April 7 cancelled

The following is issued on behalf of the Liquor Licensing Board:

In view of the latest development of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and to align with the Government's anti-epidemic measures, the Liquor Licensing Board announced today (March 29) that open hearings scheduled for April 7 have been cancelled. Further arrangements will be made for the affected open hearing cases.

Submission of petitions before ExCo meetings to be suspended

In view of the severe situation of the novel coronavirus infection, the arrangement for the Chief Executive to receive petitions outside the Chief Executive's Office before she convenes the Executive Council's meeting will

be suspended on the Tuesdays of March 31 and April 7 to minimise group gatherings. During this period, members of the public can email their petitions to ceo@ceo.gov.hk or send them to the Chief Executive's Office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Tamar, Hong Kong.

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The media session by the Chief Executive before the Executive Council's meeting will continue. As announced earlier, the relevant session will be relocated to the Auditorium of the Central Government Offices, which is more spacious. There will also be special arrangements on the number of media representatives and their seating until further notice.

DSD strengthens responsive management measures for rainy season (with photos)

A spokesman for the Drainage Services Department (DSD) said today (March 29) that the number of flooding blackspots in Hong Kong has reached the lowest on record. In order to further reduce flood risks during rainstorms, the DSD will introduce the "just-in-time clearance" arrangement during the coming rainy season and will proactively incorporate new technologies to enhance the effectiveness and efficiencies of construction and maintenance works.

The spokesman said that the DSD has removed a total of 126 flooding blackspots over the past 26 years, including the one at the junction of Morrison Hill Road and Lap Tak Lane in Wan Chai this year. There are only five remaining flooding blackspots in Hong Kong, including Shek Wu Wai in San Tin, Yuen Long; Lam Tsuen Valley Basin and Ting Kok Road in Tai Po; Chatham Road South in Tsim Sha Tsui and Pok Fu Lam Village in Southern District. Among them, the drainage improvement works at Ting Kok Road have been completed, with its effectiveness having been monitored for several years. This flooding blackspot is expected to be removed after the coming rainy season.

"In order to further reduce the flood risks during rainstorms, we will introduce the 'just-in-time clearance' arrangement during daylight hours on week days in the upcoming rainy season. Before the onset of a rainstorm, staff will be deployed to inspect about 200 locations which are susceptible to blockage by litter, fallen leaves or the like, and will immediately arrange for clearance works if necessary. Furthermore, DSD staff will inspect and clear all main drains and rivers immediately after a rainstorm or when a typhoon signal is about to be lowered to prepare for the challenges of further rainstorms," the spokesman said.

Hong Kong faces an average rainfall of about 2 400 millimetres a year, one of the highest among cities in the Pacific Rim. Flooding is inevitable under extreme rainstorms. Notwithstanding this, the DSD has analysed over 200 flooding cases between 2017 and 2019, finding that over 60 per cent of them were due to blocked drains by litter, fallen leaves or other washouts carried by surface runoff. The "just-in-time clearance" arrangement is definitely an appropriate solution.

As high rainfall severely restricts the construction and maintenance of drainage facilities, thus affecting their capacities to cope with rainstorms, the DSD has been proactively incorporating new technologies. A new remote-controlled desilting robot has been procured for silt clearing works at submerged box culverts. The robot is able to go further inside submerged box culverts, and silt can also be transported to the ground surface through a tube connected to the robot, which largely improves the efficiency of the desilting works. Workers can be spared from entering the confined and submerged space of the culverts, and desilting works will no longer be limited mostly to dry seasons.

In order to increase construction efficiencies of new works projects, the DSD also incorporated the Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA) concept, together with the Building Information Modelling technique, to design structural modules which could more easily be built and assembled amid the risks of inclement weather.

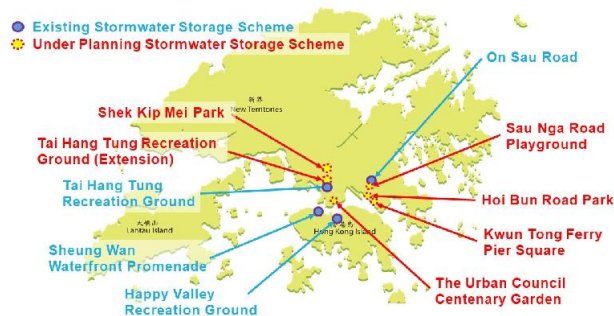
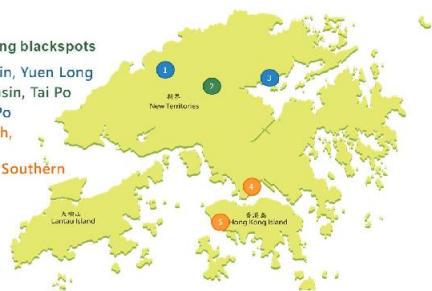
"The construction of a dry weather flow interceptor at the Cherry Street box culvert has adopted both DfMA and traditional cast in-situ methods. While structural modules are constructed off-site, part of the structures are cast in-situ. The construction period is therefore expected to be shortened by about six months," the spokesman added.

Apart from strengthening the responsive management measures before and after rainstorms, the DSD will continue to press ahead with its flood prevention strategy, which includes implementing underground stormwater storage schemes. Stormwater storage schemes aim to collect and temporarily store excessive rainwater during rainstorms, thus reducing the loading at downstream drains and the consequential flood risks. The four completed underground stormwater storage schemes in Tai Hang Tung, Sheung Wan, Happy Valley and On Sau Road have achieved remarkable results to prevent flooding in these areas. The DSD is collaborating with other departments to identify suitable public open spaces for construction of more underground stormwater storage schemes. So far, six locations are under planning, which include Shek Kip Mei Park, Tai Hang Tung Recreation Ground (extension), the Urban Council Centenary Garden in Tsim Sha Tsui, as well as Sau Nga Road Playground, Kwun Tong Ferry Pier Square and Hoi Bun Road Park in Kwun Tong District.

➤ Location of five flooding blackspots

1. Shek Wu Wai, San Tin, Yuen Long
2. Lam Tsuen Valley Basin, Tai Po
3. Ting Kok Road, Tai Po
4. Chatham Road South, Tsim Sha Tsui
5. Pok Fu Lam Village, Southern

- Minor flooding blackspot
- Small flooding blackspot
- Medium flooding blackspot



CHP investigates 64 additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 4pm today (March 28), the CHP is investigating 64 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 583 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 582 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Moreover, the DH has been progressively extending its Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme. Free testing for COVID-19 has been offered to asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving from Japan this evening. Starting

tomorrow morning, all asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving from all places under the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) will be furthered covered by the Programme.

Specimen collection containers will be provided to these travellers at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) for collection of their deep throat saliva samples for testing. The DH has set up a Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at the AsiaWorld-Expo (TSCC) to speed up the collection of specimen from inbound travellers from overseas for conducting testing for COVID-19, and facilitate those who have difficulty in arranging family members or friends to submit their specimen during home quarantine.

The DH urges the relevant inbound travellers to proceed to the TSCC immediately from the HKIA. They should provide their deep throat saliva sample in accordance with the instructions and submit it to the DH personnel on duty at the TSCC, for sending to the CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch for COVID-19 testing as soon as possible.

Those travellers who opt to collect their own deep throat saliva sample during home quarantine should do so at the earliest opportunity and ask their family members or friends to deliver it to any of the collection points in the same morning. The collection points are 13 designated chest clinics or dermatological clinics under the DH from 9am to 11am on Monday to Sunday and also some General Out-patient clinics under the Hospital Authority from 8.30am to 9.30am on Monday to Friday (except public holiday).

The newly reported cases announced today involve 40 males and 24 females aged between 7 and 76. Among them, 47 had travel history during the incubation period and 26 are overseas students. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

For information on flights that patients of the confirmed cases have taken, please refer to the following webpage: (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/flights_trains_en.pdf). Passengers who travelled on the same flights and sat within two seats surrounding those patients are urged to call the CHP hotlines 2125 1111 and 2125 1122.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

In particular, the CHP reminded those who have returned to Hong Kong from overseas or visited overseas before the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) took effect on March 19 that, although they are not subject to the 14-day compulsory

quarantine, they should stay home and avoid going out as far as possible for 14 days. They should wear surgical mask, maintain stringent personal hygiene as a measure to protect themselves and their family members. They should seek medical advice as soon as possible if symptoms develop to safeguard the health of themselves, family and friends as well as the general public.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of proliferation of the disease and continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong."

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes."

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use; after using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up the hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 65 657 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- 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;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a liter of water into each drainoutlet (U-traps) to ensure

environmental hygiene;

- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;

• Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.

Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.