

Government places vigorous enforcement efforts on regulation on compulsory quarantine of persons arriving at Hong Kong from foreign places

A Government spokesman said today (March 22) that since the introduction of compulsory quarantine arrangements for persons arriving at Hong Kong from foreign places on March 19, the Government has been enforcing the regulation with full force in the past two days.

Law enforcement agencies have been conducting spot checks against suspected offenders with the aid of electronic monitoring systems. Five persons were found to have left their dwelling places without permission, with two of them removed or cut off the electronic wristbands. Following the successful interception of the five persons by the Police, the Department of Health has immediately started the relevant investigation in collaboration with the Police and is collecting evidence for the Department of Justice's consideration of prosecution. All the five persons concerned have been sent to quarantine centres subsequently.

During the Police's operations, 36 persons were also found to have left their dwelling places without permission. The Police will place them into the wanted list and continue to locate them.

The Government strongly condemns anyone who intends to contravene quarantine orders. Such actions increase the risk of community transmission and will bring about negative impact to the health of others and public at-large. The Government will not tolerate such utterly irresponsible actions and will follow up seriously. Leaving dwelling places without permission is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum imprisonment for six months and fine of \$25,000. The Government urged all persons under quarantine to follow the law and appeals to members of public to report contravention to the Police.

Liquor Licensing Board meeting on Tuesday cancelled

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

In view of the latest development of the public health situation, and to

align with the Government's anti-epidemic measures, the Liquor Licensing Board decided this afternoon (March 22) that open hearings originally scheduled for March 24 and March 31 will be cancelled. Further arrangements will be made for the affected open hearing cases.

Latest service arrangement for 1823

The Efficiency Office announced today (March 22) that owing to the latest development of COVID-19, 1823 is now focusing on handling calls related to the epidemic and environmental hygiene. Limited services will be provided to handle other calls. The waiting/processing time may be lengthened.

From March 24 onwards, 1823 will not handle enquiries and complaints from written channels such as email, mobile App, web form and SMS until further notice.

For enquiries, please visit the 1823 website (www.1823.gov.hk) or call 1823.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (March 22), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 265 patients (130 male and 135 female, aged 13 months to 83 years) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 523 patients under isolation currently. So far, 101 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.

Lands Department adjusts its public services

In accordance with the Government's enhanced measures for disease control involving adjusting public services and making special working arrangements for civil servants, the Lands Department (LandsD) today (March 22) announced that its offices' services will be adjusted from tomorrow (March 23) until further notice in order to reduce social contact and the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus in the community.

Receipt and delivery of documents at counters and enquiry telephone line services will be provided during office hours from Monday to Friday (except on public holidays). Other counter services, including counter enquiries, payment of government rent and premiums, map sales counters, collection of compensation for land resumption, depositing of land boundary plans and survey record plans and inspection of the full list of Authorised Land Surveyors, will be suspended. Online services will be maintained as normal. Members of the public may continue to make enquiries or complaints through email.

An appeal is made to the public to minimise visiting LandsD's offices in person unless necessary. The public can purchase most map products from Hong Kong Map Service 2.0 and can pay government rent and land premiums and file enquiries or complaints as well as requests for service online or through other electronic means. Due to the special work arrangements, the processing of various enquiries, complaints and applications may be delayed and it may take a longer time to provide a reply. The department apologises for any inconvenience caused.