

# Flexibility arrangement to extend validity period of foreign domestic helpers' contracts and points to note for home quarantine for foreign domestic helpers travelling to Hong Kong

In response to the latest development of the COVID-19 infection, the Government today (March 19) announced that the flexibility arrangement to extend the validity period of the contracts of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) will be extended with immediate effect. The Labour Department (LD) also appeals to employers of FDHs and employment agencies (EAs) to make necessary arrangements to accommodate the compulsory home quarantine for FDHs travelling to Hong Kong, which is effective today.

"The Government will extend the flexibility arrangement announced on February 4, 2020 ([www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/04/P2020020400547.htm](http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202002/04/P2020020400547.htm)) to enable employers to extend the validity period of the contracts with their outgoing FDHs. The flexibility arrangement aims to assist those employers whose contracts with their existing FDHs are due to expire soon, but are in the situation where the newly hired FDHs cannot fly in to commence the new contract. The flexibility arrangement can help the affected families by allowing them to continue retaining their current FDHs temporarily while waiting for the new FDHs to report for duty. This will also help the FDHs waiting to report for duty to retain their contracts with their employers," a Government spokesman said.

According to Clause 15(a) of the Standard Employment Contract (SEC), an employer may vary Clause 2 of the SEC to extend the period of employment by not more than one month by mutual agreement between the employer and the FDH, and with approval from the Director of Immigration. Prior consent from the Commissioner for Labour is required for extending the period of an FDH contract beyond a month. Under the flexibility arrangement announced on February 4, 2020, the Commissioner for Labour has given in-principle consent for all FDH contracts that will expire on or before March 31, 2020, to be extended up till May 31, 2020, provided that such variation is mutually agreed by both the employer and the FDH.

In response to the latest development of the COVID-19 infection, the Commissioner for Labour has now given further in-principle consent for all FDH contracts that will expire on or before June 30, 2020, to vary the period stated in Clause 2 of the SEC by extending the period of employment up to July 31, 2020, on the basis that such variation is mutually agreed by both the employer and the FDH. Employers and FDHs in need may apply directly to

the Director of Immigration for extension of the period of employment and stay of the FDHs on or before June 30, 2020. Upon receiving the applications, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will process them in accordance with its established procedures and policies.

"If the contract with the current FDH has already been extended under the flexibility arrangement announced on February 4, 2020, the employer may still submit an application to ImmD to further extend the period of employment and stay of the FDHs up to July 31, 2020, if both the employer and the FDH mutually agree to the variation," the Government spokesman said.

Applications for extension of stay of FDHs may be submitted during office hours or by post to the Foreign Domestic Helpers Section at Immigration Tower in Wan Chai. The required documents for submitting the applications are as follows:

- Visa/Extension of Stay Application Form for Domestic Helper from Abroad (ID 988A) completed and signed by the FDH;
- the current SEC (ID 407) kept by the employer and the FDH with an amendment clause on extending the period of employment duly signed by both parties at the end of page 4;
- a supporting letter signed by the employer stating the reason(s) for extending the period of employment;
- the FDH's travel document (please send a copy if applying by post); and
- a visa fee of \$230.

The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely and review the above flexibility arrangement as necessary.

Meanwhile, following the Department of Health (DH)'s demand that inbound travellers arriving from all countries/territories should undergo compulsory home quarantine with effect from 0.00am on March 19, 2020, the LD appeals to the assistance of FDH employers and their EAs in reminding FDHs to comply with the compulsory quarantine requirement. Employers or their EAs are also advised to educate FDHs under compulsory home quarantine to stay at home at all times and follow the health advice of the DH. While FDHs are expected to stay at their employers' residence, should an employer wish to arrange his/her FDH to stay out from his/her residence for compulsory home quarantine, the employer should make prior arrangement with his/her EA (if applicable) to accommodate the FDH concerned. The employer is also reminded to comply with his/her obligations under the SEC, including bearing the accommodation expenses of the FDH and providing a food allowance to the FDH. An employer shall not compel his/her FDH to work outside of the employer's residence.

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## Phishing email related to Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited on phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

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## SCMA gives masks to underprivileged groups (with photos)

The Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, visited three families in Sham Shui Po today (March 19) to understand the impacts of the epidemic on their daily life and send them face masks and anti-epidemic disinfectant packs.

In view of the tight global supply of face masks as a result of the epidemic outbreak, the Government has earlier announced that all face masks donated by various sectors to the government be sent to non-government organisations for their distribution to the elderly and underprivileged groups. The aim is to share resources with the community with a view to fighting the virus together.

Mr Nip today delivered the donated face masks to the Society for Community Organisation for sending to the elderly, underprivileged families and new arrivals in need.

Mr Nip also paid visits to a singleton elderly and two new-arrival families, handing them masks, alcohol-based handrub and sanitary packs. He also explained to them the health tips to fight the disease.

Mr Nip said that mutual support from various sectors in the community is crucial in fighting the epidemic. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will keep up its anti-epidemic effort under the three major

principles, i.e. speedy response, full preparedness as well as openness and transparency. He also appealed to the community to stay united regardless of backgrounds and races, and to always maintain personal hygiene, minimise social contacts and avoid non-essential travel in a joint effort to win this "anti-epidemic battle".



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## Cancellation of HA Board Meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (March 19) announced the cancellation of the HA Board Meeting, which was scheduled for March 26, in light of the latest situation of the COVID-19 epidemic.

"Social distancing is an important public health measure to prevent further spread of the epidemic. Upon careful consideration of the latest situation, the HA has decided to cancel this meeting," the HA spokesperson said.

The spokesperson added that HA Board Meeting has been open to members of the public since 1998 to demonstrate the continuous effort of the Authority to enhance its transparency and public accountability. When circumstances

permit, the HA will resume the open meeting arrangement as soon as practicable.

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## CHP investigates 25 additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm yesterday (March 18), the CHP is investigating 25 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 193 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 192 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The cases are detailed below:

Case no.	169	170	171	172	173
Age/ Sex	34/Male	36/Male	27/Male	28/Male	55/ Male
Any underlying illness	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Yes
Onset date	March 16	March 14	March 17	March 15	March 17
Symptoms	Fever	Fever	Fever	Sore throat, headache and cough	Fever
Residence	Hyatt Centric Victoria Harbour Hong Kong in North Point	Block 2, Island Resort, Siu Sai Wan	Block 8, Saddle Ridge Garden, Sha Tin	Athletes' Hostel, Hong Kong Sports Institute, Sha Tin	Oi Wai House, Tsz Oi Court, Tsz Wan Shan
Hospital admitted (patient condition)	Ruttonjee Hospital (RH) (Stable)	Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) (Stable)	Prince of Wales Hospital (PWH) (Stable)	Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital (Stable)	Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) (Stable)

Travel history during incubation period & infectious period	February 4 to 29: Germany, February 29 to March 1: Spain, March 1 to 12: Germany	March 3 to 12: Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland	March 12 to 14: London	February 19 to March 14: France and Austria	March 4 to 14: Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and France
Condition of home contact(s)	Lives alone	Wife, two sons and two domestic helpers	Parents	Pending	Wife
Remarks					Under compulsory home quarantine

Case no.	174	175	176	177	178
Age/ Sex	31/Male	29/Male	29/Female	28/Female	29/Male
Any underlying illness	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Onset date	March 9	March 13	March 15	March 16	March 16
Symptoms	Fever	Sore throat and myalgia	Sore throat and headache	Sore throat	Cough, fever
Residence	Tower 3, Hampton Place, Tai Kok Tsui	Ying Lai House, Yau Lai Estate.	Ying Lai House, Yau Lai Estate.	Rich View Terrace, Sheung Wan	Rich View Terrace, Sheung Wan
Hospital admitted & condition	QEH(Stable)	United Christian Hospital (UCH) (Stable)	UCH (Stable)	Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) (Stable)	QMH (Stable)

Travel history during incubation period & infectious period	February 28 to March 8: Switzerland	March 2 to 5: Japan March 5 to 14: Thailand	February 27 to March 5: Japan March 5 to 14: Thailand	March 2 to 16: Spain , France and Germany	March 2 to 5: Bangladesh March 7 to 16: Spain , France and Germany
Condition of home contact(s)	Wife	Girlfriend (Case 176)	Boyfriend (Case 175)	Husband (case 178)	Wife (Case 177)
Remarks	Had a meal gathering with case 162			Tourist	

Case no.	179	180	181	182	183
Age/ Sex	63/Male	38/Male	63/Female	50/Female	24/Female
Any underlying illness	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Onset date	March 16	March 16	March 15	March 11	March 12
Symptoms	Cough	Headache and stuffy nose	Myalgia, fever	Headache, sore throat, malaise	Sore throat and cough
Residence	Block 2, Le Sommet, North Point	Branksome Crest, 3A Tregunter Path, Mid-levels	Sakura Court, 58-60 Kennedy Road, Wan Chai	Tai Mong Tsai, Sai Kung	Seymour Place, 60 Robinson Road, Mid-levels
Hospital admitted (patient condition)	QMH (Stable)	Tseung Kwan O Hospital (stable)	Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) (Stable)	UCH(Stable)	Yan Chai Hospital (Stable)
Travel history during incubation period & infectious period	March 12-16 : United States	February 27 to March 15: Malaysia and London	February 29 to March 14: London	Nil	February 27 to March 8: London



Condition of home contact(s)	Wife	Domestic helper	Husband and domestic helper	Three sons and girlfriend of one of the sons, and domestic helper	Parents and domestic helper
Remarks	Referred by Port Health Division				

Case no.	184	185	186	187	188
Age/ Sex	64/Female	23/Male	46/Female	20/Female	16/Male
Any underlying illness	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Onset date	March 12	March 12	March 2	March 9	March 11
Symptoms	Fever	Fever and headache	Cough and sore throat	Cough with sputum	Cough with sputum
Residence	Block 47, Baguio Villa, 550 Victoria Road	5 King Kwong Street, Happy Valley	Block 1, Island Resort	Studies in United Kingdom (UK)	Lives in UK
Hospital admitted (patient condition)	Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital (Stable)	RH (Stable)	RH (Stable)	PMH (Stable)	PMH (Stable)
Travel history during incubation period & infectious period	February 11 to 28: Dubai and Egypt March 5-12: Delhi, India	Studies in UK	March 6 to 11: Spain	Studies in UK	Lives in UK
Condition of home contact(s)	Two domestic helpers and a private driver	Father	Husband	Pending	Father (Case 189)



Remarks				Referred by Port Health Division	Referred by Port Health Division
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Case no.	189	190	191	192	193
Age/ Sex	49/Male	12/Male	34/Female	46/Female	33/Female
Any underlying illness	Yes	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Onset date	March 12	March 17	March 16	March 11	March 11
Symptoms	Cough and sore throat	Cough and headache	Fever and cough	Cough and runny nose	Cough and runny nose
Residence	Resides in UK	E Hotel Sham Shui Po	Phase 2, Sunshine City, Ma On Shan	Hang Yue Court, 2-14 Pitt Street, Yau Ma Tei	Penta Hotel Tuen Mun
Hospital admitted (patient condition)	PMH (Stable)	Caritas Medical Centre (Stable)	PWH (Stable)	QEH (Stable)	UCH (Stable)
Travel history during incubation period & infectious period	Resides in UK	March 4 to 16: UK	Nil	Nil	March 7 to 16: UK and Spain
Condition of home contact(s)	Son (Case 188)	Mother	Parents and younger sister	Mother	Parents and younger brother
Remarks					

For information on flights that patients of the confirmed cases have taken, please refer to the following website: ([www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/flights\\_trains\\_en.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/flights_trains_en.pdf)). Passengers who travelled in the same cabin of the same flights with patients of the confirmed cases are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see the annex.

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.

"Meanwhile, according to our epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in the local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP 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 a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. A new hotline (2125 1111) is newly added yesterday. The hotlines operate from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm yesterday, a total of 38 327 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://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 drain outlet (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.