

## [Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session at Hong Kong International Airport](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session at the Hong Kong International Airport yesterday (March 18):

Reporter: Who would be given these bottles for further testing? Are they randomly selected or people from certain flights? Or only people from high risk areas will be tested? Is the authority targeted to get everybody a bottle for testing?

Secretary for Food and Health: Regarding the testing of the COVID-19 virus, as I have said earlier, it is the first night we start to implement the compulsory quarantine order. We shall start a pilot and randomly select some people and give them the bottles for taking specimens. This is just for tonight because we want to test the logistics and also the operation to see how best to do it and the entire procedure. When it comes to a later stage, for example in the next few days, the Department of Health will be working out a risk assessment stratified model as to how best to collect more samples. Regarding who will be given this test and whether everyone would be tested, it all depends on the capacity of our laboratory. Looking at the number of people coming back, we do not think the current capacity of the laboratory will be able to do test on all (returnees). We would have to save some capacity for close contact of confirmed cases and we need a buffer. On the one hand, we are trying our best to expand our testing and surveillance capacity to this group of returnees. On the other hand, we have to reserve some testing capacity for our confirmed cases, close contact of confirmed cases and people who are in our quarantine centres.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## [Labour Department appeals to employers and employment agencies to make arrangements for foreign domestic helpers undergoing compulsory home](#)

## quarantine

The Labour Department (LD) today (March 18) appeals to employers of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) and employment agencies (EAs) to make necessary arrangement to accommodate the compulsory home quarantine for FDHs travelling to Hong Kong.

Following the Red Outbound Travel Alert announced by the Government on March 17, 2020 on all overseas countries/territories based on public health considerations, the Department of Health (DH) has extended health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers arriving from all countries/territories accordingly and demand them to undergo compulsory home quarantine with effect from 0.00am on March 19, 2020.

LD appeals to the assistance of FDH employers and their EAs in reminding FDHs to comply with the compulsory quarantine requirement. While FDHs are expected to stay at their employers' residence, should an employer wish to arrange the FDH to stay out from his/her residence, the employer should make prior arrangement with his/her EA (if applicable) to accommodate the FDH concerned. The employer is reminded to comply with his/her obligations under the Standard Employment Contract, including bearing the accommodation expenses and providing food allowance to the FDH. An employer shall not compel his/her FDH to work outside of the employer's residence. 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 DH.

For enquiry on employment rights and benefits, please contact LD at the dedicated FDH hotline at 2157 9537 (manned by "1823") by email at [fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk](mailto:fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk).

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## Police clarify unfounded overseas media report

In response to an overseas media report today (March 18) which alleged that Mainland law enforcement officers were deployed to Hong Kong to observe the frontline operations of Hong Kong Police Force, Police clarified that a written reply was issued to that overseas media earlier to refute the claim.

Police reiterate that there was no such visit nor observation by any members of the Mainland law enforcement agencies during the recent protests as mentioned in the media report. Police express regret over such unfounded report.

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## **Government responds to media enquiries on statement by Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

In response to media enquiries, a spokesman of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government said today (March 18) the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that the countermeasures were to reciprocate the United States (US) Government's unwarranted restrictions on the Chinese media agencies and personnel in the US. It stated that China's fundamental state policy of opening-up will not change. Foreign media organisations and journalists who cover stories in accordance with laws and regulations are always welcome in China, and will get continued facilitation and assistance.

Hong Kong enjoys press freedom. The HKSAR Government has been facilitating media organisations and journalists from other countries to cover news in Hong Kong. This policy is in compliance with the Basic Law and the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

Hong Kong has always adopted a pragmatic and open policy on the employment of professionals in Hong Kong, allowing those possessing special skills, knowledge or experience of value to and not readily available locally to work in Hong Kong, including journalistic work.

In handling each immigration case, the Immigration Department will consider the circumstances of the case and act in accordance with the laws and immigration policies.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs today issued a statement entitled "China Takes Countermeasures Against Restrictive Measures on Chinese Media Agencies in the US" setting out its position on the acts of the US side and the countermeasures adopted to reciprocate.

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## **Exemption arrangement under Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation**

Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign

Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) (the Regulation), made under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Public Health Emergency) Regulation, will commence at 0.00am tomorrow (March 19).

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration has exempted the following categories of persons from the quarantine requirement with effect from the commencement of the Regulation:

1. crew members of aircrafts who need to commute to and from foreign places for performance of necessary duties;
2. crew members of goods vessels;
3. government officials carrying out governmental duties;
4. Public officers at or above the level of Executive Directors (or equivalent) in the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission and the Insurance Authority undertaking international obligations and/or participating in international co-operation pursuant to their regulatory functions;
5. construction personnel tasked to carry out off-site duties in foreign places that are essential and cannot be replaced by other means to ensure the quality, integrity and statutory compliance of services or components to be used in government projects;
6. experts, personnel of the academic sectors or of international authorities who are engaged in research and/or provide advice in combating the COVID-19 infection to the HKSAR Government;
7. staff and personnel of public bodies and their partners for the supply of wristbands and related materials for home quarantine; and
8. personnel of public bodies and their partners, agencies, companies or organisations for the supply to Hong Kong of personal protective equipment (PPE) or materials/equipment for the production of PPEs.

The Department of Health (DH) will arrange medical surveillance for persons under the above exempted categories of persons during their stay in Hong Kong. Persons under medical surveillance are required to wear masks and check temperature daily for reporting to the DH. In addition, exempted persons are also subject to the temperature check and health declaration procedures carried out by the DH at various boundary control points during arrival and departure clearance.

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration may exempt any person or categories of people from the quarantine requirement if the Chief Secretary is satisfied that the person's or persons' entry into Hong Kong are—

- supplying goods or services required for the normal operation of Hong Kong or the daily needs of the people in Hong Kong;

- for governmental operation;
- for the protection of the safety or health of the people of Hong Kong or the handling of public health emergency; or
- cases of exceptional circumstance that serves the public interest of Hong Kong.

Contravening the quarantine requirement would be a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Government had earlier published in the Gazette on February 7, 2020 the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), which mandates all persons having stayed in the Mainland for any period during the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of nationality and travel documents used, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days.