

## **Registration for Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme to end on March 13**

Registration for the Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme established under the Government's Anti-epidemic Fund will end on Friday (March 13). Eligible travel agents wishing to apply for a one-off subsidy of \$80,000 should submit their applications to the Travel Agents Registry (TAR) as soon as possible.

At present, there are more than 1 700 licensed travel agents in Hong Kong. Since the commencement of registration on February 21, so far the TAR has received more than 1 500 registrations. The registered licensed travel agents account for about 90 per cent of the total, among which about 150 travel agents have received payment.

The Government announced the establishment of the scheme on February 14, 2020. All travel agents holding a valid travel agent licence as at February 14 are eligible for registration. The registration form and guideline can be downloaded from the website of the TAR ([www.tar.gov.hk](http://www.tar.gov.hk)) or obtained from its office (Address: Room 4901, 49/F, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong).

The registration procedure is simple and convenient. Travel agents can submit the completed registration forms together with documentary proof of their bank accounts to the TAR by post (the postmark date will be regarded as the date of receipt) or in person on or before March 13. If they file the registration forms and supporting documents via fax or email, they will be required to submit the original registration forms afterwards. The Government will verify the original registration forms upon receipt. In general, after receiving the completed registration form and the required supporting document, it is estimated that the disbursement of subsidies could be arranged in about 14 working days.

---

## **Registration for Licensed Guesthouses Subsidy Scheme to end on March 20**

Registration for the Licensed Guesthouses Subsidy Scheme established under the Government's Anti-epidemic Fund will end on March 20. Eligible guesthouses wishing to apply for a one-off subsidy of either \$50,000 or \$80,000 should register with the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) under the Home Affairs Department as soon as possible.

There are currently about 1 800 licensed guesthouses in Hong Kong. Since

the commencement of registration on February 21, so far the OLA has received more than 1 500 registrations. The registered licensed guesthouses account for over 80 per cent of the total.

All guesthouses with a valid guesthouse licence issued under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance as at February 21, 2020 are eligible for registration. The registration form and guideline can be downloaded from the website of the OLA ([www.hadla.gov.hk](http://www.hadla.gov.hk)) or obtained from the OLA's office (Address: 10th Floor, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong).

Under the Subsidy Scheme, each eligible guesthouse with one to five licensed guestrooms may receive a one-off subsidy of \$50,000 and those with six or more licensed guestrooms may receive a one-off subsidy of \$80,000.

Guesthouse licence holders should submit the completed registration forms together with documentary proof of their bank accounts to the OLA by post (the postmark date will be regarded as the date of receipt) or in person on or before March 20. If they file the registration forms and supporting documents via fax or email, they will be required to submit the original registration forms afterwards. The OLA will verify the registration forms upon receipt. In general, after receiving the completed registration form and the required supporting document, it is estimated that the disbursement of subsidies could be arranged in about 14 working days.

---

## MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (March 8) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

---

## [Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes \(with photo\)](#)

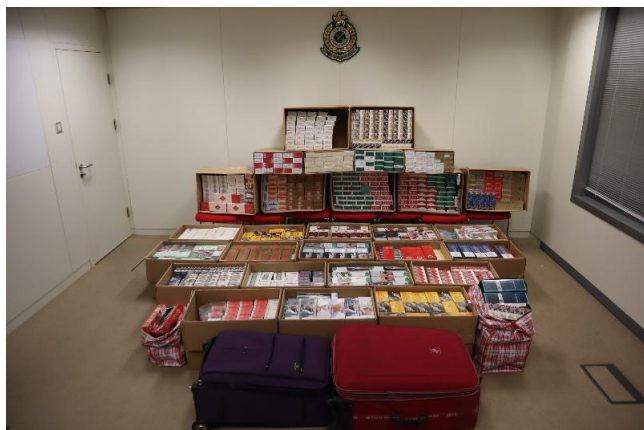
Hong Kong Customs today (March 7) seized about 310 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$850,000 and a duty potential of about \$590,000 in Hung Hom.

Customs officers conducted an anti-illicit cigarette operation in Hung Hom today and seized the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes from a sub-divided unit. A 66-year-old woman was arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



---

## [CHP investigates two additional cases](#)

## of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 7), the CHP is investigating two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 110 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 109 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The first confirmed case involves a 38-year-old woman (the 109th case) who returned to Hong Kong from Wuhan by the fourth chartered flight arranged by the Government. The patient with good past health lives in Shenzhen. She has all along been asymptomatic and was immediately arranged for quarantine at Chun Yeung Estate upon arrival at Hong Kong on March 5. Her respiratory specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today. She was sent to the Prince of Wales Hospital for isolation and treatment and is now in a stable condition.

The patient travelled alone to Wuhan in Hubei Province on High-Speed Rail in mid-January to visit her relatives and reported to have stayed in her mother's home in Jiangnan district in Wuhan without going out.

The other confirmed case involves a 73-year-old woman (the 110th case) who is a member of the same tour group as the two patients of the 105th and 107th cases confirmed on March 4 and 6 respectively. The patient travelled with her husband to India from February 4 to 19. She has good past health and lives in Block 1, Swiss Towers at 113 Tai Hang Road, Tai Hang. She has all along been asymptomatic. She attended Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital yesterday and her respiratory sample was tested preliminary positive for COVID-19 virus. She was sent to Queen Mary Hospital for treatment on the same day and is in a stable condition. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus upon further testing today. Her husband and domestic helper who live with her are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

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 annex.

Separately, the CHP was informed by the health authority of Korea yesterday of a confirmed case in Korea which involves a male patient with onset of symptoms on February 27. He took the flight CX288 by Cathay Pacific in economy class from Frankfurt to Hong Kong on February 28, and then departed Hong Kong for Seoul on February 29 on the flight CX438 in economy class. People who travelled in the same class of the two flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP reminded members of the public that as the transmission of COVID-19 virus has been increasing around the world, they are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside

Hong Kong.”

“Meanwhile, according to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in 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 meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible.”

The spokesman said, “The CHP strongly urged 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 the 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, Indian health authority and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 29 203 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 COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public grasp 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.

Members of the public are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. The public should take heed of the health advice below if it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province of Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 virus;
- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of the cases were reported); Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy which cover Bologna, Milan, Venice and Verona, as well as Iran;
- When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.