

# **DH strengthens health declaration measure at Hong Kong International Airport and urges the public to delay non-essential travel outside Hong Kong**

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 6) announced that starting from 0.00am on March 8, the health declaration arrangements at the Hong Kong International Airport will be expanded from inbound flights from the Mainland to all flights arriving Hong Kong. All inbound travellers arriving at the Hong Kong International Airport will be required to complete and submit a health declaration form.

The DH has rolled out an electronic health declaration form for the convenience of travellers and to reduce the use of papers. Currently, all travellers on flights arriving Hong Kong from the Mainland can choose to fill in and submit the health declaration form on their smartphone or mobile device. The measure will be extended to all inbound travellers arriving at the Hong Kong International Airport from 0.00am on March 8. The DH will seek the assistance of airline companies to distribute the health declaration forms to inbound travellers and disseminate information on the submission of electronic health declaration forms.

Meanwhile, the DH's Centre for Health Protection (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.

Since February this year, the accumulated number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in countries/areas outside Mainland China has kept on rising. The number of reported cases has increased substantially in some countries since March, indicating active community transmission. As at 6pm today, the number of confirmed cases on the Mainland was 80 552 while at least 16 600 cases have been reported in over 80 countries/areas.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has earlier issued a Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on Korea and three regions (Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto) in Italy, as well as alerted the public about health risk in Iran under the Red OTA already in force.

If it is unavoidable to travel to countries/areas outside Hong Kong, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms during travel and wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. Besides, the public should observe personal and environmental hygiene and take preventive measures, in particular, avoid touching animals (including game) poultry/birds or their droppings; avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms; and do not consume game

meat or patronise food premises where game meat is served.

In addition, the CHP will also further extend the Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme to cover all private clinics and hospitals so that cases of COVID-19 can be identified early in order to minimise the risk of community transmission. The CHP today issued letters to doctors and private hospitals to inform them that the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) under the CHP will provide free testing on COVID-19 virus for relevant samples submitted by private doctors.

Starting next Monday (March 9), private doctors can collect respiratory samples from patients presenting with fever or respiratory symptoms, in particular for those with travel history outside Hong Kong within 14 days before onset of symptoms, and send the samples to PHLSB for testing on COVID-19 virus via accredited private laboratories. If samples are tested positive, the CHP will arrange the patients concerned for admission to public hospitals for isolation and treatment.

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## **CHP investigates three additional cases of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 6), the CHP is investigating three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 108 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 107 confirmed cases and one probable case).

One of the confirmed cases involves a 56-year-old man (the 106th case). The patient, with long term illness, lives in Block A, Po Shan Mansion on 14-16 Po Shan Road, Mid-levels. He developed fever, headache and myalgia since March 4. He attended Canossa Hospital yesterday (March 5) and then attended Ruttonjee Hospital where he was admitted for treatment. His respiratory sample tested positive for COVID-19 virus and he is now in a stable condition.

The patient travelled to the United States and Mexico from February 2 to 20 and to London and Paris from February 25 to March 3. His wife developed fever since March 2 and is now admitted to Ruttonjee Hospital for treatment. Her respiratory sample tested negative for COVID-19 virus. The patient's other household contacts, namely his two daughters, two domestic helpers and a driver, are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The patient took the flight BA323 (Business class cabin) by British Airways from Paris to London on March 3 and then BA27 (Business class cabin) by British Airways from London arriving Hong Kong on March 4. Passengers who travelled in the same cabin on board the two flights are urged to call the

CHP hotline.

The other two cases are related to the 105th case confirmed on March 4. One of the cases involves an 84-year-old man (the 107th case) who joined the same tour to India from January 31 to February 24 with the 69-year-old female patient of the 105th case. The patient has good past health and lives in Scenic Villas, Southern District. He developed cough with sputum since February 28 and attended the University Health Service, the University of Hong Kong on February 29. He was identified and sent to Queen Mary Hospital for treatment by the CHP during contact tracing yesterday. His respiratory sample was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and he is now in a stable condition. His wife and domestic helper who live with him are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The patient took the flight CX694 by Cathay Pacific from New Delhi, India to Hong Kong and arrived on February 24. Passengers on board the same flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The other case involves a 69 year-old man (the 108th case) who is the husband of the patient of the 105th case. The patient, with underlying illnesses, lives in Landwood Court, Villa Lotto, Happy Valley. He did not travel to India and had no recent travel history. He was asymptomatic and sent to the quarantine centre as a close contact yesterday. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and was arranged to Queen Mary Hospital for management. He is now in a stable condition. The domestic helper who lives with him is asymptomatic and quarantined.

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.

Meanwhile, the CHP is following up on the contact tracing of two overseas cases. The first one is a confirmed case in Thailand in which a male patient took the flight CX250 (First class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from London arriving Hong Kong on February 29, and took the flight CX617 (Business class cabin) by Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Bangkok on the same day. People who travelled on the same cabin of the two flights are urged to call the CHP hotline.

The second case is confirmed in Canada involving a female patient who took the flight CX838 by Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Vancouver on February 29. People who took the same flight are urged to call the CHP hotline.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "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 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 28 521 calls were received.

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

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. The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling 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.

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## [CE visits Hongkong Post \(with photos\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited the Kowloon Speedpost



Operations Centre at Lei Yue Mun Estate in Yau Tong today (March 6) to view the centre's operation. She also thanked postal staff for working day and night during the COVID-19 epidemic, prioritising the delivery of a large number of parcels containing face masks to members of the public.

Accompanied by the Postmaster General, Miss Cathy Chu, Mrs Lam inspected the Kowloon Speedpost Operations Centre. She was briefed on how Hongkong Post has dealt with the surge in volume of inward mail items during the epidemic, with many containing such protective gear as face masks, through manpower deployment and adjustments to working hours. From the end of the Lunar New Year up to now, Hongkong Post has completed the delivery of 160 000 parcels containing face masks to the public.

Mrs Lam praised postal staff for their commitment to people-oriented services. In response to the tight supply of face masks in the market, they proactively identified parcels with face masks and prioritised their delivery to address the needs of the public. Although workload has increased amid the epidemic, postal staff have worked tirelessly and taken the necessary precautionary measures to resume full public services. She thanked the postal staff for their hard work and encouraged them to continue to provide quality services to the public.



# Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected methamphetamine and cocaine (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (March 6) seized about 3.2 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine and 8.3 kilograms of suspected cocaine with a total estimated market value of about \$10 million at Hong Kong International Airport.

Two female passengers, aged 62 and 66 respectively, arrived in Hong Kong from Johannesburg, South Africa, today. During customs clearance, the batch of suspected methamphetamine was found concealed inside the false compartments of their carry-on suitcases while the batch of suspected cocaine was found strapped around their body. They were then arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment strategy to select outbound, inbound and transit passengers for clearance to intercept different kinds of drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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



## Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 6) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	42
Affected area involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	North District Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed relevant symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).