

Subsidies to live marine fish wholesale traders open for registration

To assist the fisheries industry to tackle the financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government will provide subsidies to live marine fish wholesale traders under the Anti-Epidemic Fund.

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that the Government will provide a subsidy of \$200,000 to the operator of each live marine fish wholesale stall in Fish Marketing Organization (FMO) markets. Each live marine fish wholesaler will receive an application form from the FMO market. The starting date for application is March 2. Completed application forms together with copies of the required documents shall be submitted to AFCD through FMO market before March 13.

Subsidies will be disbursed to successful applicants as soon as possible.

For more details, please contact the Department at 2150 7103, or view the Department's website (www.afcd.gov.hk).

Special traffic arrangements in Happy Valley

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

Police found a suspected explosive item on Hau Tak Lane, Happy Valley this morning (February 29).

Officers of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) are handling the situation at scene. Special traffic arrangements will be implemented temporarily:

A. Temporary road closure

- Hau Tak Lane
- Queen's Road East between Wong Nai Chung Road and Kennedy Road
- Stubbs Road between Shiu Fai Terrace and Queen's Road East

B. Temporary traffic diversions

1. At the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East
 - Traffic along northbound Wong Nai Chung Road cannot turn left to Hau Tak Lane
 - Traffic along northbound Wong Nai Chung Road cannot turn left to westbound Queen's Road East
 - Traffic along southbound Canal Road Flyover (Happy Valley Exit) cannot turn right to westbound Queen's Road East
2. Traffic along downhill Stubbs Road should make a u-turn at the junction with Shiu Fai Terrace
3. At the junction of Kennedy Road and Queen's Road East
 - Traffic along downhill Kennedy Road should turn left to westbound Queen's Road East
 - Traffic along eastbound Queen's Road East should make a u-turn at the junction with Kennedy Road or turn right to uphill Kennedy Road

Due to safety concern, members of the public should not go to the above area. People at scene are advised to follow Police's instruction during evacuation.

CHP investigates cluster of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 29) investigating a cluster of Legionnaires' disease (LD) cases involving 15 patients and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

Further to the CHP's announcements on a cluster of LD cases on February 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 17 and 18, an additional LD case relevant to the cluster has been recorded today, bringing the total to 12 male and three female patients aged 52 to 94.

The additional case involved a male patient, aged 71 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Wong Shek House, Ping Shek Estate, Kwun Tong.

"Epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient developed shortness of breath since February 4 and was admitted to United Christian Hospital (UCH) on the same day with diagnosis of pneumonia. He was discharged on February 19. He was admitted to UCH again on February 24 for increased shortness of breath. His paired serum samples showed a four-fold rise in antibody titre against Legionella pneumophila upon testing. He had no travel history in the incubation period. Investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change

the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Blood donation precautionary measures in response to COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) has established policies to ensure blood safety. The BTS regularly reviews the blood donation arrangements for prospective donors who have returned from areas with potential risks of infectious diseases. In response to the latest developments in COVID-19, the spokesperson for the BTS today (February 29) announced the following precautionary measure to be implemented with immediate effect:

- Members of the public who have recently visited a place with active community transmission of COVID-19 should defer blood donation for 28 days from the date of departure.

Currently, areas with active community transmission include the Mainland, Korea, Iran and three regions of Italy (Lombardia, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna). The list of places with active community transmission is available on the following webpage of the Centre for Health Protection and will be updated from time to time:
www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf.

Meanwhile, the measures stated below continue to remain in effect:

- Members of the public who have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 while that patient was symptomatic should defer blood

donation for 28 days; and

- Members of the public with confirmed COVID-19 infection will be deferred for 180 days after complete recovery.

The above arrangements have been made following careful assessment and thorough consideration of associated risks on blood safety by the Hospital Authority (BTS) Expert Panel on Blood and Blood Products Safety. The Expert Panel will remain vigilant and work closely with relevant departments to monitor the latest developments and review related measures in a timely manner. Meanwhile, all blood donors are reminded that if they develop symptoms of fever, respiratory tract infection or pneumonia after blood donation, they should seek medical advice and inform the healthcare staff of the BTS (during office hours: 2710 1201/2710 1243/2710 1298; outside office hours: 2710 1210/2710 1234) as soon as possible.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (February 29), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 48 patients (18 male and 30 female, aged 13 to 99) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 116 patients under isolation currently. So far, 33 patients who had COVID-19 infection 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.