

# Transcript of remarks by SCS

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, at a media stand-up after the Legislative Council Finance Committee meeting today (February 28):

Reporter: Secretary, when civil servants return to work, will they or will they not be provided with surgical masks or do they have to bring their own? And second question, regarding the increased head count for police officers in the coming Budget, why is it necessary to increase by that much?  
...(inaudible) is not a small number even for such a big force.

Secretary for the Civil Service: Let me take the last question first. All requests for additional manpower have to be based on actual operational needs. And I believe the Police have a strong case to argue and to support their request. And I am sure there will be opportunities for the head of the department and the relevant bureau colleagues to explain the justification to the public. Thank you.

Reporter: And the second question?

Secretary for the Civil Service: Regarding masks, I have to stress that the Government has always been providing masks to those colleagues who are in need. It is of course our priority in doing so to first provide for those who are involved in medical services, and also those who are involved in frontline anti-epidemic efforts. And we will also provide masks for those who are involved in necessary essential services and emergency services.

Reporter: What about other civil servants ...(inaudible)?

Secretary for the Civil Service: I haven't finished. Apart from those categories I have mentioned, we will also provide masks for colleagues who in the course of the duty have to be in frequent close contact with the public, like counter services. And also those who are working in very congested or closed environment with a lot of people around. In fact, concerning the needs of the individuals, the Government understands the concerns of colleagues about the epidemic, about the infection risks. Therefore, under the direction of the steering committee chaired by the Chief Executive, we have promulgated guidelines to relax the procedures for acquiring masks so that individual departments can go and direct purchase masks from the market, so that they can better address the needs of colleagues in their departments. We will continue and I am sure individual departments will continue to adopt this attitude in managing the use of masks for the needy colleagues in their departments.

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

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## CFS announces food safety report for January

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (February 28) released the findings of its food safety report for the last month. The results of about 14 000 food samples tested were satisfactory except for six samples that were announced earlier. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 1 800 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, some 3 500 samples were taken for chemical tests and the remaining 8 700 (including about 8 500 taken from food imported from Japan) were collected to test radiation levels.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygiene indicators, while the chemical tests included pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others.

The samples comprised about 3 400 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; 600 samples of cereals, grains and their products; 700 samples of meat and poultry and their products; 1 500 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; 1 500 samples of aquatic and related products; and 6 300 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The six unsatisfactory samples comprised five frozen confection samples detected with counts of hygiene indicator organisms exceeding the legal limit and a raw oyster sample found to contain excessive cadmium.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

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## **Water Supplies Department public services arrangements**

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) announced today (February 28) that it will implement targeted measures to reduce social contact and infection control measures and gradually resume its public services. Commencing on March 2, the WSD's public services will return to normal except for the following:

- The H2OPE Centre (Water Resources Public Education Centre) will remain closed; and
- The "Excursion with Water Save Dave" Visiting Programme for individuals and groups will continue to be cancelled.

The arrangements above will be effective until further notice.

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## **Special arrangements for subsidised welfare services and services of Social Welfare Department**

The Government has announced that it will implement targeted measures to reduce social contact and infection control measures and gradually resume more public services from March 2 in an orderly manner. A spokesperson from the Social Welfare Department (SWD) today (February 28) announced the arrangements for the welfare services subsidised by the SWD from March 2.

Details of the arrangements are as follows:

(1) All aided child care centres, day care centres for the elderly, sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, integrated vocational training centres and day activity centres will suspend their service delivery. These centres will, however, remain open depending on the situation to serve those in special need. Individual service users who have the need for these services may contact the centres or service units concerned in advance.

(2) Apart from (a) and (j) which are provided as normal, the other services

will be provided on a limited scale as stated below and with groups and programmes suspended:

- a. All residential care services;
- b. Integrated Family Service Centres (only providing casework service);
- c. Integrated Services Centres (only providing casework service);
- d. Short-term Food Assistance Service;
- e. Integrated Home Care Services (only providing meal, escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- f. Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (only providing meal, escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- g. Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities (only providing escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- h. Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities (only providing escort, nursing and administration of medicine services);
- i. Visiting Medical Practitioner Service for Residential Care Homes;
- j. Hotline services; and
- k. Humanitarian Assistance for Non-refoulement Claimants.

Areas within the above service units designated for public use, such as resource corners and game corners, will be temporarily closed.

(3) Centre-based services subsidised by the SWD, such as district elderly community centres, neighbourhood elderly centres, social and recreational centres for persons with disabilities, integrated children and youth services centres, children and youth centres and community centres will not be open to the public to reduce the risk of infection arising from the gathering of people. These centres will, however, provide services on a limited scale (such as meal service provided by elderly centres and standardised care need assessment for elderly services).

(4) For other services not covered by (1) to (3) above, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating them may decide whether to continue to provide them under their respective Funding and Service Agreements having regard to their circumstances.

These arrangements will continue until further notice, except for aided child care centres which will basically suspend their service delivery as stated above up to and including April 19 as class resumption in schools will be no earlier than April 20. NGOs should keep their clients informed of their specific arrangements.

Regarding the SWD's own services, the SWD will continue to provide its services through various means. However, services which may cause the gathering of people and increase the risk of infection such as groups, large-scale programmes, resource corners and game corners, etc. will be suspended. Service users may call the hotline number 2343 2255 for enquiries.

The SWD will continue to monitor the situation and work with stakeholders, with a view to resuming more public services for the needy as circumstances permit.

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## Latest arrangements on REO public services

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) announced today (February 28) that its following offices will resume public services starting from next Monday (March 2):

\*REO enquiry counter (located at 10/F, Harbour Centre, 25 Harbour Road, Wan Chai);

\*REO enquiry counter (located at 13/F, Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay);

\*Electoral Information Centre (located at 13/F, Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay); and

\*REO office (located at Unit 2301-2303, Millennium City 6, 392 Kwun Tong Road, Kwun Tong).

As well, the 2020 Voter Registration Campaign has been launched. The REO appeals to registered electors (individual or body electors) that if there are any changes in their registration particulars they should use the specified form to notify the REO on or before April 2 in accordance with the electoral law. Otherwise, the relevant changes in registration particulars will not be reflected in the final registers (i.e. final registers for geographical constituencies, functional constituencies and Election Committee subsectors) to be published in July this year.

"Eligible persons who have not yet registered as electors are reminded to submit new registration applications using the specified form by the statutory deadline of May 2 so that they can be included in the final registers to be published in July this year and be able to vote in election(s) (including the Legislative Council General Election to be held this year)," an REO spokesman said.

The REO urged members of the public to submit applications for change of registration particulars and new registrations as early as possible.

For enquiries, please call the REO hotline at 2891 1001.