

## **Applicants/recipients of CSSA and SSA need not rush back to Hong Kong**

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) said today (February 14) that in view of the latest situation of novel coronavirus outbreak, the Director of Social Welfare will give consideration to disregard absences from Hong Kong of applicants/recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme (including Old Age Allowance, Old Age Living Allowance and Disability Allowance) who fail to satisfy the residence requirement or the permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong owing to the epidemic. The SWD appealed to them that there is no need to rush back to Hong Kong.

In the light of the epidemic development, applicants for the Guangdong Scheme and Fujian Scheme can submit their applications by post, instead of doing so in person in Hong Kong.

For enquiries please contact the respective Social Security Field Units (SSFUs) during office hours. Please visit the following webpage for the telephone numbers of SSFUs:

[www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/1/en/Contact\\_telephone\\_number\\_of\\_Social\\_Security\\_Field\\_Units\\_in\\_SWD-en\(10-2-2020\).pdf](http://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/1/en/Contact_telephone_number_of_Social_Security_Field_Units_in_SWD-en(10-2-2020).pdf).

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## **CHP investigates three additional cases of novel coronavirus infection**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (February 14), the CHP is investigating three additional case of novel coronavirus infection, taking to 56 the number of confirmed cases so far in Hong Kong.

The first case involves a 41-year-old woman (the 54th case) who is the cousin of the 37-year-old male patient of the 53rd case confirmed yesterday (February 13). The patient has good past health and lives in Tai Long Wan Village, Shek O. She developed cough since February 3 and sought medical attention at Ruttonjee Hospital yesterday and was admitted for isolation and management. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus and she is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. She had dinner with the patients of five confirmed cases (the 46th, 48th, 49th, 52nd and 53rd case) at Star Seafood Restaurant in North Point on January 26 evening. According to the preliminary epidemiological investigations by the CHP, the patient has eight household

close contacts.

The second case involves a 70-year-old man (the 55th case) with underlying illnesses who lives alone in Shek Yi House, Shek Lei (II) Estate. He had a fall at home and was sent to Princess Margaret Hospital on February 12. He had developed malaise, shortness of breath and cough with sputum since February 2. At the hospital, he presented with fever and desaturation and was admitted for management. His respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus and he is now in a critical condition. The patient had a day trip to the Mainland through the Lok Ma Chau Control Point on January 22.

The third case involves a 61-year-old woman (the 56th case) with good past health who lives in 233 Wing Lok Street, Sheung Wan. She developed cough and epigastric pain since February 10, and fever and shortness of breath since February 12. The patient sought medical attention at Queen Mary Hospital yesterday and was admitted for isolation and management. Her respiratory sample was tested positive for novel coronavirus and she is now in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her husband is asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, some of the confirmed cases are locally infected. 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."

The spokesman said, "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. The public should go out less and reduce social activities, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

"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); 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 Health Bureau of Macao.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. The CHP is also closely monitoring and following up on the contact tracing of relevant confirmed cases in the Mainland and overseas. 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.

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 13 485 calls were received.

A dedicated webpage ([www.gov.hk/ncv](http://www.gov.hk/ncv)) has been set up by the CHP. Information including the latest local situation, list of buildings and list of flights/trains/ships relevant to the confirmed cases, countries/areas with reported cases as well as health advice and a "Novel Coronavirus Infection Local Situation Interactive Map Dashboard" are available on the webpage 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;
- 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 public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province where community transmission of novel coronavirus is occurring;
- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible community transmission of novel coronavirus infection. 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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## Latest arrangements on LCSD public services

In view of the latest situation, the Government has announced that the special work arrangement for government departments will be extended up to and including February 23. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (February 14) that various LCSD cultural and leisure facilities will continue to be temporarily closed and recreational, sports and cultural programmes to be held will also be cancelled until March 2 (Monday).

A spokesman for the LCSD said that in order to safeguard public health, social distancing is of paramount importance to prevent the further spread of the epidemic. Temporary closure of venues and cancellation of programmes can avoid people from gathering. It also helps reduce chances of social gathering before and after participating in activities, and reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community.

Land sports facilities and aquatic facilities temporarily closed include all sports centres, sports grounds, grass pitches, artificial turf soccer pitches, tennis courts, squash courts, bowling greens, golf facilities, public swimming pools, beaches, Tuen Mun Recreation and Sports Centre, water sports centres and holiday camps. Cultural facilities include all museums, performance venues, public libraries and their study rooms, mobile libraries, and music centres of the Music Office.

During the temporary closure period, URBIX will maintain Internet and mobile app ticketing and hotline services. Public libraries will continue to

provide online services such as e-Books and e-Databases. Non-fee charging land-based leisure facilities including parks, playgrounds, outdoor hard-surface pitches, skateboard grounds, skateparks, roller skating rinks and cycling grounds will maintain services.

Meanwhile, processing and acceptance of individual and block booking applications for the department's non-fee charging land recreation and sports facilities as well as block booking applications for the fee charging land recreation and sports facilities are suspended until further notice.

Application for use of wedding venues, amphitheatres and non-fee charging leisure venues for non-designated use/sales activities is suspended until further notice.

The LCSD will continue to monitor the situation closely and review the arrangements in a timely manner. Refund arrangements will be announced later.

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## **Recall of Synalar Ointment 0.025% (with photo)**

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 14) endorsed a licensed wholesale dealer, DKSH Hong Kong Ltd (DKSH), to recall the product Synalar Ointment 0.025% (Hong Kong Registration Number: HK-06809) from the market due to a potential quality issue.

The DH received notification from DKSH that, during the stability testing of the above-mentioned product, the content of active ingredient was found slightly less than the specifications before the expiry of its 36-month shelf-life. The quality issue might affect the efficacy of the product. As a precautionary measure, DKSH is recalling the product from the market.

The above product is a prescription only medicine which contains fluocinolone acetonide. It is a topical corticosteroid preparation used in the treatment of various skin disorders. According to DKSH, the product has been supplied to the Hospital Authority, local private hospitals, private doctors and pharmacies.

DKSH has set up a hotline (2895 9668) to answer related enquiries.

So far, the DH has not received any adverse reaction report in connection with the product. The DH will closely monitor the recall.

Patients who have used the above product should seek advice from their healthcare professionals if in doubt.



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## Exemption arrangement under Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C)

The Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (the Regulation), made under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Public Health Emergency) Regulation, was effective 0.00am of February 8.

Further to the eight categories of persons previously announced, in accordance with section 4(1) of the Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration today (February 14) exempted the following categories of persons from the quarantine requirement with effect from 0:00am tomorrow (February 15).

1. personnel of organisations commissioned by the Director of Social Welfare providing welfare support for Hong Kong residents living in the Mainland;
2. construction personnel tasked to carry out off-site duties in the Mainland 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, public housing projects and Airport Authority projects in Hong Kong;
3. experts or personnel of the academic sectors who are engaged in research and provide advice in combating the novel coronavirus infection;
4. staff of Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse and livestock importers residing in the Mainland;
5. staff and personnel of public bodies and their partners for the supply of

wristbands and related materials for home quarantine; and

6. 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.

The Regulation was published in the Gazette on February 7 to tackle the spread of the novel coronavirus infection with resolute and stringent measures. With the exception of exempted persons, all persons having stayed in the Mainland for any period during the 14 days preceding arrival, regardless of nationality and travel documents used, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. It is a criminal offence to contravene the quarantine order and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and six months' imprisonment.

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.