

CHP investigates two additional imported cases of novel coronavirus infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 29) investigating two additional imported cases of novel coronavirus infection. The public is again urged to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The two cases involve a couple from Wuhan in Hubei Province, who are a 72-year-old man and a 73-year-old woman. They took the flight KA853 by Cathay Dragon from Wuhan to Hong Kong on January 22. They stayed at W Hong Kong on the same day until yesterday (January 28). Afterwards, they visited The Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong and Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong and were subsequently sent by ambulance from Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong to Queen Mary Hospital yesterday where they were admitted for isolation and treatment.

The couple developed fever on January 25 and are in stable condition. Their respiratory samples were tested positive for novel coronavirus.

The CHP has immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Five hotel staff will be regarded as close contacts and be transferred to Lady MacLehose Holiday Village for quarantine. Medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts except for one who is symptomatic and admitted to Queen Mary Hospital for isolation and treatment. Investigation is ongoing.

The CHP has reported the case to the World Health Organization (WHO), National Health Commission (NHC), Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the health authority of Macao.

There are 10 confirmed imported cases so far. The CHP is continuing its epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing. The CHP is also closely monitoring a number of overseas cases and conducting related contact tracing.

The CHP today verified with the NHC that a confirmed case in Shanghai had close contact with a 47-year-old man residing in Hong Kong. He was earlier admitted to the Prince of Wales Hospital as a suspected case and subsequently tested negative for novel coronavirus. He was regarded as a close contact of the confirmed case in Shanghai and will be transferred to Lady MacLehose Holiday Village for quarantine.

Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. The Lady MacLehose Holiday Village under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has been converted as quarantine centre and close contacts would be transferred to the village for quarantine.

For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see annex.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for the cases, which operates from 8am to 9pm daily to answer public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 1 261 calls were received.

A dedicated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) has been set up by the CHP to provide relevant information and health advice on Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent. Information of the latest notifications received from the Mainland and overseas will be updated to the CHP website (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf) daily at 9am and 6pm to help the public grasp information on the affected countries/areas.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP will continue to maintain its liaison with the National Health Commission, the World Health Organization and the relevant health authorities, and closely monitor the situation for risk assessment."

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;
- 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. If it is unavoidable to travel to such places, put

on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong, and self-isolate for 14 days as far as possible. For those returning from other parts of the Mainland, they are advised to stay home for 14 days upon their return as far as possible. Those who need to go out should wear a surgical mask;

- 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.

Government strives to ensure supply of surgical masks

Given the severe situation of the novel coronavirus infection, a Government spokesman said today (January 29) that sufficient and stable supply of equipment for health protection is of paramount importance. In view of the keen demand for surgical masks by members of the public and their tight supply owing to the Chinese New Year holidays or other reasons, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is working proactively to increase the overall supply of surgical masks through a multi-pronged approach, striving to maintain a stable supply.

In particular, representatives of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and relevant government departments met members of local chambers of

commerce and the retail industry today to learn more about the situation of the supply of surgical masks and problems encountered by importers and retailers, with a view to offering assistance to them and addressing the current tight supply.

The spokesman said that the HKSAR Government is maintaining close contact with the Mainland authorities. Customs departments between the two places are collaborating to follow up on the clearance of surgical masks procured by the Government or the market so as to speed up their delivery to Hong Kong. The Government Logistics Department is also actively sourcing globally. It has contacted more than 140 suppliers from over 10 countries, striving to procure more surgical masks to cope with the epidemic.

The spokesman added that the supply of surgical masks in the market will still be tight in the near future. As advised by experts, people should go out less often during this period of time and observe personal hygiene. The HKSAR Government has announced a package of measures to prevent people from gathering and contacting. They include extending the Chinese New Year holidays of all schools in Hong Kong, introducing special work arrangement for government departments and appealing to private sector organisations to make flexible work arrangements likewise, closing some of the government facilities such as leisure and cultural facilities and suspending recreation and sports programmes, as well as adjusting services subsidised by the Social Welfare Department. In fact, although today is the first working day after the Chinese New Year holidays, there is obviously less people on the street when comparing to normal working days. The HKSAR Government appeals to members of the public for their understanding of the inconvenience caused by the relevant measures and the inadequate supply of protective equipment. It also appeals to the community to work together in disease prevention and control at this critical moment.

At the same time, Hong Kong Customs has launched a large-scale territory-wide special operation since January 27 to combat surgical masks with false origin claims, non-compliance with consumer goods safety standards and false trademarks to protect safety and rights of the public. The operation will continue.

The spokesman said the Government noticed some members of the public are rushing to buy food. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has confirmed with the major suppliers that the supply of food products remains normal, and the suppliers will replenish the shelves of food products as soon as possible. The spokesman stressed that the suspension of services at some control points announced yesterday will not affect freight services, so food supply to Hong Kong will not be affected. The Government will maintain communication with the sector to ensure smooth supply of food.

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 28) seized about 2.2 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$2.3 million at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Toronto, Canada, yesterday. During customs clearance, the batch of suspected cocaine was found concealed inside the false compartments of his check-in suitcase. The man was then arrested.

The arrested man, aged 69, has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (January 30).

Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment approach and focus on selecting passengers from high-risk regions for clearance. The department has also further stepped up enforcement action during the Lunar New Year with a view to combating transnational drug trafficking activities effectively.

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).



Rioters hurl petrol bombs at Kwai Chung Police Station

Around 8pm tonight (January 29), rioters hurled petrol bombs at Kwai Chung Police Station. Some petrol bombs exploded on the carriageways of Kwai Foo Road, seriously endangering the safety of the public and road users.

The case is classified as “Arson” and under the investigation of District Investigation Team 2 of Kwai Tsing District. The Police condemn the radical acts and will carry out thorough investigation.

Adjustments on Non-Emergency Services of Hong Kong Police Force

In response to the latest development of novel coronavirus infection, some non-emergency services under the Hong Kong Police Force will be adjusted from today (January 29) until further notice. For relevant details, please visit the following websites :

1. Sexual Conviction Record Check
https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/11_useful_info/scrc.html
2. Application for Certificate of No Criminal Conviction
https://www.police.gov.hk/.../11_useful_in.../cert_no_crime.html
3. Data Access Request for Criminal Conviction Data
https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/11_useful_info/ccd.html
4. Application for Licences and Permits at the Police Licensing Office
https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/11_useful_info/licences/
5. Access to Information about Traffic Conviction and Fixed Penalty
https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/05_traffic_matters/
6. Police Recruitment
https://www.police.gov.hk/ppp_en/15_recruit/index.html