

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 28) 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	Male
Age	35
Affected area involved	United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Camel ride
Hospital	Princess Margaret Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

"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](#).

Temporary closure of WSD's Customer Enquiries Centres and H2OPE Centre

To tie in with the special work arrangement for government departments to reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Water Supplies Department announced today (January 28) the Customer Enquiries Centres of the department will be closed from January 29 to 31. For enquiries on account matters, please call the department's 24-hour Customer Services Hotline on 2824 5000.

Separately, the H2OPE Centre (Water Resources Public Education Centre) has also been closed until further notice.

Services at PlanD's Planning Enquiry Counters to be suspended

Due to the special work arrangement of Government departments announced by the Government today (January 28) in order to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Planning Department (PlanD) announced that the counter services of the department's Planning Enquiry Counters at North Point Government Offices and Sha Tin Government Offices will be temporarily suspended from tomorrow (January 29) until further notice.

For enquiries, please call the PlanD on 2231 5000.

Temporary suspension of FEHD public facilities from tomorrow

To tie in with the response level under the "Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance" being raised to Emergency Response Level and avoid people from gathering, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (January 28) announced that the following FEHD facilities will be temporarily suspended from tomorrow (January 29) and their educational and outreaching programmes will be cancelled until further notice.

1) Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre
Address: Block S4, Kowloon Park, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

2) Communication Resource Unit, Centre for Food Safety
Address: Room 401, 4/F, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Nam Cheong Offices and Vehicle Depot, 87 Yen Chow Street West, Kowloon.

The spokesman said, "Public services provided by the FEHD, including cleansing, environmental hygiene, pest control, slaughterhouses, public markets, hawker management, burial and cremation, as well as various licensing services will generally remain normal. The Centre for Food Safety will continue its surveillance on food sold in Hong Kong to protect public health and ensure that food for sale is fit for consumption."

"Except for those providing essential public services, other FEHD staff are not required to return to the offices but to work or stand by at home after the holidays," he added.

[Public hospital daily update on Wuhan-related cases](#)

As at noon today (January 28), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health (DH) the admission of 78 patients (36 male and 42 female, aged 14 months to 91) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of severe respiratory disease associated with a novel infectious agent. Specimens of the patients concerned have been sent to the DH for testing. Among the 103 patients under isolation, 100 are in stable condition. One male patient in North District Hospital and one female patient in Tuen Mun Hospital are in serious condition due to their underlying diseases. One male patient being infected with novel coronavirus in Princess Margaret Hospital is still in serious condition.

The HA 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.