

## **Hong Kong Customs deeply grieved by death of three Customs officers**

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang, today (January 22) expresses grave grievance by the death of three on-duty Customs officers happened last night (January 21) and extends the deepest condolences to their families.

A Customs vessel was conducting a patrol at the waters near Sha Chau around 9pm last night and five officers onboard fell to the sea.

They were rescued by the officers from the Fire Services Department and Marine Police. Two of them were sent to North Lantau Hospital in conscious state and the rest were rushed to Tuen Mun Hospital but were later certified dead.

Cause of the incident is under investigation. The department has been in touch with families of the three deceased officers and would make every effort to help their families. The department also expresses sympathy to other two injured officers and wishes them a speedy recovery.

The three deceased officers comprise one Senior Customs Officer, one Acting Senior Customs Officer and one Customs officer. The two injured officers comprise one Customs Officer and one Probational Customs Officer.

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## **Fatal traffic accident in Wong Tai Sin**

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Wong Tai Sin last night (January 21) in which an 87-year-old man died.

At about 6.40pm yesterday, a public light bus (PLB) driven by a 65-year-old man was travelling eastbound along Tung Lung Road. When approaching Choi Tung House of Tung Tau Estate, it reportedly knocked down the 87-year-old man who was crossing the road.

Sustaining serious head injuries, the 87-year-old man was rushed to Kwong Wah Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 7.15pm.

The PLB driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death. He has been released on bail pending further enquiries and is required to report back to Police in early February.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Kowloon East

is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 2305 7500 or 2305 7606.

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## **CHP provides latest information on pneumonia cases of novel coronavirus infection in Mainland and Taiwan**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 21) provides the latest information on the pneumonia cases of novel coronavirus infection detected in the Mainland and Taiwan. The public is again urged to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

According to the notification from the National Health Commission (NHC), 72 additional pneumonia cases of the novel coronavirus infection were reported in Hubei Province yesterday (January 20), including 60 cases in Wuhan. The additional cases in Wuhan comprised 33 male patients and 27 female patients, aged 15 to 88, who developed symptoms before January 18 this year. Among the additional cases, 17 are in serious condition, and three are in critical condition. In addition, three additional deaths were reported, which comprised an 89-year-old male, a 66-year-old male and a 48-year-old female. Separately, the second pneumonia case of the novel coronavirus infection with history of travel to Wuhan was also reported in Shanghai.

As of yesterday, the total number of novel coronavirus infections in the Mainland was 291 cases, including 270 in Hubei Province, five in Beijing, 14 in Guangdong Province and two in Shanghai. A total of 1 739 close contacts have been identified. All have been put under medical surveillance, with 817 of them having completed the surveillance.

As of yesterday, the total number of novel coronavirus infections in Wuhan was 258 cases. Among them, 25 patients have been discharged, and six have died. Currently, 227 are still hospitalised. Among them, 51 patients are in serious condition and 12 are in critical condition. A total of 988 close contacts have been identified. All have been put under medical surveillance, with 739 of them having completed the surveillance.

Separately, the CHP has also been closely monitoring the first confirmed case of infection of the novel coronavirus in Taiwan as imported from Wuhan. According to information from the health authority of Taiwan, the case involved a 55-year-old woman coming from Wuhan, who arrived at Taoyuan International Airport in Taiwan on January 20 and had presented with fever,

cough and shortness of breath. Quarantine personnel at the airport arranged medical attention for the patient. The X-ray showed that the patient had pneumonia who was later tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

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

The spokesman reminded the public to 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.

A dedicated webpage ([www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html](http://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 on the affected countries/areas is available from the following webpage: [www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics\\_of\\_the\\_cases\\_novel\\_coronavirus\\_infection.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection.pdf).

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- 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:

- Avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms in countries/areas with possible transmission of the 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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## Third-term Commission on Poverty convenes ninth meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the ninth meeting of the third-term Commission on Poverty (CoP) this afternoon (January 21). Apart from discussing the Community Care Fund (CCF) programmes, members were also briefed on the implementation of transitional housing projects and supplementary analyses on the 2018 poverty situation, as well as the new initiatives to benefit people's livelihoods announced by the Chief Executive on January 14.

Members noted the implementation progress of various assistance programmes and the financial position of the CCF. The CoP endorsed launching two new assistance programmes and introducing a new drug under a medical assistance programme, as well as the proposed indicative budget for the CCF medical assistance programmes for 2020-21. Details of the resolutions are as follows:

### New assistance programmes

(i) The CoP agreed to launch a programme to assist the Hong Kong Housing Society to refurbish Trackside Villas of the MTR Corporation Limited for "T-Home" transitional housing. It is anticipated that the refurbishment works will commence in the second quarter of 2020 in phases and the refurbished

flats would be available for intake in the third quarter of 2020 at the earliest. With total funding of \$45.94 million, the project is expected to involve at most 252 units and benefit around 1 120 persons; and

(ii) In response to the invitation by the Chief Executive in the 2019 Policy Address, after agreeing to launch the One-off Living Subsidy for Low-income Households Not Living in Public Housing and Not Receiving CSSA programme at the meeting last October (the 2020 programme), the CoP endorsed the rollout of the programme again in January 2021 (the 2021 programme). The CoP agreed that the CCF Secretariat would issue letters to eligible households for the 2020 programme to confirm their eligibility, without the need for them to re-submit applications for the 2021 programme. In addition, households that become eligible for the 2021 programme as a result of change in their financial situation or living conditions can apply in phases starting from January 2021. The total funding for the 2021 programme is \$1,447.73 million and it is expected to benefit about 137 150 households (about 353 600 persons). The subsidy levels of the 2021 programme will be the same as those under the 2020 programme: \$4,500 for one-person households, \$9,000 for two-person households, \$12,500 for three-person households, \$14,500 for four-person households and \$15,500 for five-or-more-person households. The 2021 programme is expected to be launched and receive applications in January 2021.

Introduction of a new drug under the Subsidy for Eligible Patients to Purchase Ultra-expensive Drugs (Including Those for Treating Uncommon Disorders) Programme

(iii) The CoP approved the introduction of the drug Dinutuximab Beta for the treatment of neuroblastoma to the Subsidy for Eligible Patients to Purchase Ultra-expensive Drugs (Including Those for Treating Uncommon Disorders) Programme. The Hospital Authority will implement the relevant arrangement upon registration of the drug. It is expected that 10 patients would benefit in the first 12 months after implementation. The introduction of the new drug could be covered by the approved budget and no additional funding is required.

CCF medical assistance programmes' indicative budget for 2020-21

(iv) The CoP approved the indicative budget for three CCF medical assistance programmes (the First Phase Programme of Medical Assistance Programmes, the Subsidy for Eligible Patients to Purchase Ultra-expensive Drugs (Including Those For Treating Uncommon Disorders) Programme and the Subsidy for Eligible Patients of Hospital Authority to Purchase Specified Implantable Medical Devices for Interventional Procedures Programme) for 2020-21 (from April 1, 2020, till March 31, 2021). The overall indicative budget for the programmes is \$986.95 million.

At the meeting, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) briefed members on the work of the Task Force on Transitional Housing and the current situation and way forward for transitional housing projects. The Task Force on Transitional Housing (Task Force) led by the Under Secretary for Transport

and Housing was established under the THB in June 2018 to provide one-stop cross-bureau and cross-departmental co-ordination and professional support for community organisations to implement the projects and commence works as soon as possible. Since its establishment, the Task Force has actively participated in and facilitated the implementation of community initiatives on transitional housing, providing a total of 10 000 units within the next three years. The Task Force is seeking approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to approve a \$5 billion funding scheme to support transitional housing projects by non-governmental organisations. With cross-sectoral collaboration, the Government has identified adequate land for the transitional housing supply target announced by the Chief Executive in the 2019 Policy Address to provide 10 000 units within the next three years and will further increase the amount by 5 000 to a total of 15 000 units for the next three years to relieve the pressure on families living in unpleasant conditions and those waiting for public rental housing for a long time. Members supported the initiative on transitional housing and gave views on the future developments of transitional housing projects.

In addition, relevant bureaux briefed members on the new initiatives to benefit people's livelihoods announced by the Chief Executive in January 2020. Members noted the Government's efforts to respond to the aspirations of the grass roots and the underprivileged and expressed their views on the new initiatives. As a follow-up to the discussion at the last meeting, the Office of the Government Economist and the Census and Statistics Department provided supplementary information on the socio-economic analyses on poor one-person households and the poverty statistics taking into account recurrent cash, non-recurrent cash and in-kind benefits in 2018. The supplementary information has been uploaded to the CoP's website ([www.povertyrelief.gov.hk](http://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk)).

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## **CHP investigates influenza B outbreak at residential care home for persons with disabilities in Kwai Chung**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 21) investigating an influenza B outbreak at a residential care home for persons with disabilities (RCHD) in Kwai Chung, and again reminded the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene against influenza.

The outbreak at the RCHD involves 18 male residents aged 25 to 59 and two male staff members. They have developed fever, cough and runny nose since January 11. All sought medical attention. Among them, 17 required

hospitalisation and 15 of them were discharged following treatment. All patients are in a stable condition.

The respiratory specimens of all 18 residents tested positive for influenza B virus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the RCHD and advised it to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory infections. The RCHD has been put under medical surveillance.

"Hong Kong has already entered the 2019-20 winter influenza season and seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past week. It is anticipated that local seasonal influenza activity will continue to rise in the coming weeks and remain at an elevated level for some time. Members of the public should remain vigilant for protection against influenza," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Particularly, children, people aged 50 to 64 years, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses who have not yet received influenza vaccination this season are urged to get vaccinated as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. They should promptly seek medical advice if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential complications. Parents and carers are reminded to render assistance in prevention, care and control for vulnerable people," the spokesman added.

Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses. For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).