

Government statement

In response to media enquiries on a social media post issued by a civil service staff union about the procession on January 1, a Government spokesman made the following statement today (January 3):

The Government expressed deep concern and regret over the remarks made by a civil service staff union on social media platform expressing dissatisfaction against the Police's decision, which was made after taking into account public safety considerations, to end the procession on January 1 earlier, and alleging that the decision has restricted Hong Kong people's rights of procession, assembly and association.

The Government stressed that civil servants should not unscrupulously criticise the policies of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government or enforcement operations by individual departments. If any civil servant has violated the Civil Service Code, the Government will deal with it in a serious manner in accordance with the established mechanism.

The Government has stated in the press release "Government strongly condemns rioters breaching public peace" issued on January 2 that the Police, after taking into account public safety considerations, decided to end the procession earlier. It is clear that the civil service staff union concerned has completely ignored this fact and made unscrupulous criticisms. This is totally unacceptable to the Government.

According to the Civil Service Code, civil servants shall uphold the principle of political neutrality, which means that they should serve the Chief Executive and the Government of the day with total loyalty and to the best of their ability, no matter what their own political beliefs are. When civil servants express their views, they should ensure that their views would not give rise to any conflict of interest with their official duties, or would be seen to be compromising the important principles of maintaining impartiality and political neutrality which they should uphold when discharging their duties.

All civil servants (including civil servants who are office bearers of staff unions) must abide by the relevant civil service regulations or code.

Government holds inter-departmental meeting on cluster of pneumonia cases

in Wuhan (with photo)

The Government today (January 2) held an inter-departmental meeting to examine the prevention measures adopted in response to the cluster of pneumonia cases detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province and to remind all relevant departments to heighten their vigilance and be well-prepared.

Chairing the meeting, the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, noted that although no serious pneumonia case related to those in Wuhan has been detected in Hong Kong so far, the purpose of today's meeting is to let all relevant policy bureaux and government departments be well-prepared and make necessary arrangements. The Government will stay alert with a view to ensuring necessary measures be put in place as soon as possible whenever necessary.

Professor Chan said that the Government had strengthened prevention and control measures in many aspects including enhancing health surveillance measures at all boundary control points, referring suspected cases to public hospitals for isolation and treatment. Also, the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH) have already informed healthcare staff to stay alert.

Policy bureaux, government departments and organisations attending today's meeting included the Education Bureau, the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Security Bureau, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the DH, the HA, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Home Affairs Department, the Information Services Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Social Welfare Department and the Tourism Commission.

Measures that have already been taken by various departments include:

Surveillance, prevention and control measures

- already put in place surveillance, prevention and control measures, and remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest development;
- closely monitor the latest situation of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan and update the surveillance criteria and testing strategies accordingly;
- to address public concern and to increase transparency, the Government will daily announce the number of cases meeting enhanced surveillance;
- strengthen port health measures. From January 3 onwards, additional thermal imaging systems will be put in place in the Hong Kong International Airport for checking body temperature of inbound travellers from Wuhan. For all boundary control points including Hong Kong West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express

Rail Link, fever patients with acute respiratory symptoms who had visited wet markets or seafood markets in Wuhan 14 days prior to the onset of the illness will be immediately referred to public hospitals for isolation, treatment and follow-up. The MTR Corporation Limited, the Airport Authority, and the relevant airlines have been advised to enhance cleaning and disinfection measures of the incoming express trains and planes from Wuhan;

- inform the HA about the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan;
- send letters to daytime service units of institutions and schools, urging them to strengthen personal and environmental hygiene measures;
- strengthen the cleaning and maintain environmental hygiene of public facilities under the purview of all government departments; and
- remind travellers to wear surgical masks and seek medical attention if they present with respiratory symptoms, and reveal their travel history to doctors.

Alerting healthcare staff

- HA has reminded frontline healthcare staff including those working in the 18 Chinese Medicine Centres for Training and Research to pay special attention to clinical information of suspected pneumonia patients, including the presentation of fever and acute respiratory illness, or pneumonia symptoms, who have visited wet markets and seafood markets in Wuhan 14 days prior to the onset of illness;
- send letters to all doctors and private hospitals including Chinese medicine practitioners, reminding them to pay attention and referred suspected case;
- if a suspected case is identified, frontline healthcare staff should send the patient to airborne infection isolation room for treatment with urgent laboratory investigation; and to inform the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the DH and the headquarters of HA; and
- keep close communication with the CHP of the DH to monitor the development of the situation.

Travel advice

The public should take heed of the preventive measures below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- avoid touching 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;
- 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 having 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 having a fever or other symptoms, inform the doctor of recent travel history and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.

Health advice

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should 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 secretion after coughing or sneezing;
- 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 or hand dryer. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, 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.



Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

The inter-departmental meeting on pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province was held today (January 2). The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, Dr Wong Ka-hing, and the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority, Dr Tony Ko, met the media after the meeting. Following is the transcript of remarks made by Professor Chan:

Reporter: There are three cases that the Hospital Authority reported to the Centre for Health Protection. Do you have more details? The three people went to Wuhan and could you provide more information on where did they go? Can the Secretary further detail the action measures, health checks that are conducting and the follow-up reporting procedures?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, I will talk about the key message and then I will invite Dr Ko to talk about the three cases. The first important message is that so far, we have not received any Wuhan-related severe pneumonia cases. The three cases that we were talking about – that were admitted to the Hospital Authority – had not actually visited the Wuhan market. They have been to Wuhan before and came back but then they have not visited the market. The second important message that I would like to deliver is that due to the public concern, starting from tomorrow, the Government will announce the number of related cases under the heightened surveillance system. Of course, there are increased surveillance procedures that both the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health have taken place, notably is the port health. At the boundary check points – both the airlines and the express train – there would be announcements and there will be increased surveillance on fever using different machines. If they identify any person with fever, then the people will be taken aside for a questionnaire to understand more about their clinical history. Of course, during the inter-departmental meeting just now, bureaus and different departments will also step up the cleaning of their facilities. For example, the Education Bureau, Social Welfare Department, they will receive a letter from the Centre for Health Protection and then, they will write letters to their stakeholders to alert them of the situation and also to give advice on personal as well as environmental hygiene measures.

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

Hong Kong Customs detects three passenger drug trafficking cases in two days and seizes suspected cocaine valued at \$10 million (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs detected three cases of drug trafficking by passengers in the past two days (December 31, 2019, and January 1, 2020) at Hong Kong International Airport. About 10 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$10 million were seized in total.

A female passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Dubai on December 31. During customs clearance, about 4.5kg of suspected cocaine were found

concealed inside four boxes of chocolate in her backpack.

Also, two male passengers arrived in Hong Kong from Brazil via France and from Ethiopia yesterday. During customs clearance, about 4.4kg of suspected cocaine were found concealed inside the false compartments of the carry-on suitcase and briefcase of the first male passenger, while about 1.2kg of suspected cocaine were found concealed in four personal hygiene product bottles inside the check-in suitcase of the second male passenger.

The three persons connected with the cases were arrested and have each been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. They will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (January 3).

Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment strategy to select inbound, outbound and transit passengers for clearance to intercept different kinds of drug trafficking activities. Before or after long holidays and festive occasions, there is a possibility that drug trafficking syndicates may increase drug trafficking in order to meet keen demand. Customs will further step up enforcement action to suppress drug trafficking activities effectively before the coming holiday.

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).





Fatal traffic accident in Kwun Tong

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Kwun Tong this afternoon (January 2) in which a 53-year-old man died.

At about 12.05pm, a light goods vehicle (LGV) driven by an 82-year-old man was travelling along Cha Kwo Ling Road westbound. When approaching near the junction of Cha Kwo Ling Road and Ko Fai Road, it reportedly lost control, collided with a private car which parked at roadside and later rammed into water barriers and a bollard light. The LGV continued to skid forward along Cha Kwo Ling Road, knocked down two male pedestrians, aged 53 and 46 respectively, and finally hit the railings and crashed onto the pavement.

Sustaining serious head injury, the 53-year-old male pedestrian was rushed to United Christian Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 3.24pm. In addition, the 82-year-old LGV driver felt unwell and the 46-year-old male pedestrian sustained minor injuries. They were sent to United Christian Hospital for medical treatment in conscious state.

The LGV driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for further enquiries.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Kowloon East is underway.

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