

Update on supplies from Mainland

The Task Force on Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

A spokesperson for the TLB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

The spokesperson said today (December 19) that Shenzhen operated 142 cargo vessel trips and transported around 12 450 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water from December 16 to yesterday (December 18), equivalent to about 60 980 tonnes of goods, of which around 30 TEUs (about 280 tonnes) were fresh food and around 12 420 TEUs (about 60 700 tonnes) were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 1 392 960 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 6 613 510 tonnes of goods, of which around 3 270 TEUs (about 27 590 tonnes) were fresh food and around 1 389 690 TEUs (about 6 585 920 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) arranges for dedicated staff to conduct rapid nucleic acid tests, using nasopharyngeal swabs for specimen collection, for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. A total of 9 678 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted for the period from December 16 to yesterday, among which 71 cases that tested preliminarily positive or indeterminate were found. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The TLB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, while reducing the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong.

Man sentenced for violating Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation

A 61-year-old man was sentenced by the Shatin Magistrates' Courts today (December 19) for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A).

The man has earlier been issued with a compulsory quarantine order. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he left the place of quarantine on May 23. He was charged with contravening sections 32 (1) and 32 (3) of the Regulation and was fined \$6,000 by the Shatin Magistrates' Courts today.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that co-operation of and support by members of the public play a critical role in the anti-epidemic work. They must strictly observe relevant requirements in order to fight the pandemic and minimise the risk of transmission in the community. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who breaches the relevant regulations.

Public consultation on raising fixed penalty level for public cleanliness and obstruction offences

The Government today (December 19) launched a one-month public consultation on the preliminary proposal to raise the level of fixed penalty for public cleanliness and obstruction offences under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570) (Fixed Penalty Ordinance).

The Government spokesman said that the Government was committed to enhancing the environmental hygiene and cityscape of Hong Kong. In the past few months, the District Matters Co-ordination Task Force led by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration has taken measures on various fronts to endeavour to enhance environmental hygiene in Hong Kong in a short period of time. The Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address that the next steps of the Task Force include conducting a comprehensive review on the existing statutory powers and penalties relating to environmental hygiene to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and deterrent effect of enforcement actions against thorny environmental hygiene problems. The first stage is to consult the Legislative Council this year on the proposal to increase the fixed penalty level. Other proposed legislative amendments will be put forth

in mid-2023.

At present, there are nine scheduled offences under Schedule 1 of the Fixed Penalty Ordinance. The level of fixed penalty has remained at \$1,500 since June 2003. On the other hand, the Government Programme on Tackling Hygiene Black Spots commenced this August has achieved some initial success. In order to sustain, consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's environmental hygiene in the long run, the Task Force considers it necessary to raise the statutory penalties of environmental hygiene offences to increase the deterrent effect and strengthen the law-abiding value of the public. To complement the raising of fixed penalty, the Government will continue to carry out publicity and education and promote community participation.

The proposal is to raise the fixed penalty for seven scheduled offences, which involve the conduct of individual members of the public including disposal of waste and spitting at public places, country parks or into the sea, to \$3,000; and raise the fixed penalty for two scheduled offences mainly related to shopfront extension and illegal disposal of construction waste or a large amount of other wastes to \$6,000.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that there may be various views in the community on the increase in fixed penalty. We are therefore conducting a one-month public consultation to earnestly listen to the community's views on the proposed increase before finalising it."

The consultation paper can be downloaded from the website of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (www.eeb.gov.hk/food/en/press_and_publications/consultation/index.html). From today until January 19, 2023, members of the public may send their views by post (addressed to the Environment and Ecology Bureau, 17/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong), by fax (2136 3282), by email (fixed_penalty_review@eeb.gov.hk) or using the e-form in the public consultation document.

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Sha Tin, Tai Po, Sai Kung and Central and Western

Districts

In light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Sha Tin, Tai Po, Sai Kung and Central and Western Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (December 19) that the Sha Tin District Office (STD0), the Tai Po District Office (TPD0), the Sai Kung District Office (SKD0) and Central and Western District Office (C&WDO) have distributed a total of about 61 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The STD0 distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Vista Paradiso for voluntary testing through the property management company and the owners' corporation.

The TPD0 also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Plover Cove Garden and the Golden Gate for voluntary testing through the property management companies.

The SKD0 also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Nan Fung Plaza for voluntary testing through the property management company.

In addition, the C&WDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Huncliff Court and residential premises around Hollywood Road for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the owners' corporations. The C&WDO also arranged to distribute rapid test kits to households living in "three-nil" buildings with positive sewage testing results in the District.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.

Public reminded to pay attention to traffic arrangements of Lam Tin Interchange, Tseung Lam Highway and Wan O Road and bus services for Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 10) reminded members of the public that the Lam Tin Interchange, Tseung Lam Highway and Wan O Road (including the associated cycle track and footpath) will be commissioned at 8am tomorrow (December 11). Motorists can use the new route to travel to and from Tseung Kwan O and Kwun Tong as well as the Eastern Harbour Crossing.

"The traffic at the new road sections and the adjacent areas will sometimes remain busy after the commissioning of the new roads. Depending on the traffic conditions and destination, motorists may choose appropriate routes, including the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel, to travel to and from Tseung Kwan O. They should pay attention to the signage at the scene, and reduce speed and be courteous when approaching the new roundabout, signalised junctions and merging points," a TD spokesman said.

In addition, five new franchised bus routes will provide services from December 12 (Monday) via the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel in the morning and evening peak times from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays), including:

- KMB Route No. 96 (Hong Sing Garden – Tai Po Industrial Estate);
 - KMB Route No. 290E (Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate – Tsuen Wan West Station);
 - KMB Route No. 298X (Hang Hau (North) – Cheung Sha Wan (Kom Tsun Street));
 - NWFB Route No. 790 (Oscar by the Sea – Tsim Sha Tsui East (Mody Road));
- and

- NWFB Route No. 795 (Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate – Hoi Tat Estate (Sham Mong Road)).

The bus stops at Lam Tin Interchange and Wan O Road will also commence operation on the same date.

Passengers may browse the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk/en/transport_in_hong_kong/tunnels_and_bridges_n/tkoltt/index.html) or bus operators' websites and mobile applications for information about the service areas, operating hours and bus stop locations of these routes in order to plan their journeys in advance. The TD has also reminded bus companies to closely monitor the operations of these routes on the first day, and arrange spare buses to meet passenger demand.