

Update on supplies from Mainland

The Task Force of Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) 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. In addition to road transport arrangements, transportation of goods by water and railway is already in service.

A spokesperson for the THB 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.

Currently, there are three water transportation routes between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, namely (1) from Shenzhen Yantian International Container Terminals to Hong Kong Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCT); (2) from Shenzhen DaChan Bay Terminals to KTCT; and (3) from China Merchants Port (South China) Management Center (Shenzhen Mawan, Shekou and Chiwan Container Terminals) to Hong Kong River Trade Terminal and elsewhere. Together with the water transportation routes from other cities in Guangdong Province, including the routes from Guangzhou Lianhuashan Port, Nansha Port, Huadu Port, Zhongshan Huangpu Port and Zhuhai Doumen Port to different terminals in Hong Kong, the water transport capacity amounts to tens of thousands of tonnes daily.

The spokesperson said today (May 19) that Shenzhen operated 54 cargo vessel trips and transported around 6 040 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water yesterday (May 18), equivalent to about 26 550 tonnes of goods, of which around 10 TEUs (about 60 tonnes) were fresh food and around 6 030 TEUs (about 26 490 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 380 060 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 1 941 850 tonnes of goods, of which around 1 680 TEUs (about 14 430 tonnes) were fresh food and around 378 380 TEUs (about 1 927 420 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

To further ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong through land transport, a trial run of cargo transfer was conducted by the THB at a yard situated on Kam Pok Road, San Tin, Yuen Long, and it was completed smoothly. The THB will continue to work with the Mainland authorities to fully take forward cargo transfer arrangements on the Hong Kong side. It is a contingency measure in response to the latest epidemic situation in the city so as to reduce the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong, ensuring both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) has arranged for dedicated staff to conduct rapid antigen tests for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points (BCPs) from February 28 onwards. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. In order to further improve the accuracy of the tests, the TD has already switched to use rapid nucleic acid tests at the BCPs. Starting from April 21, the sampling method for rapid nucleic acid tests has been further changed to nasopharyngeal swabs. A total of 3 030 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday in which 32 drivers preliminarily tested positive. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The THB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, with a view to complementing the supply through road, water and railway transport, enhancing capacity and efficiency as well as optimising the flow of cross-boundary supplies.

[Missing man in Cheung Sha Wan located](#)

A man who went missing in Cheung Sha Wan has been located.

Huang Zhijie, aged 24, went missing after he was last seen in a hospital on Wing Hong Street on May 14 morning. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

The man was located in a hospital on Tsing Chung Koon Road on May 17 night. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

[Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Richland Gardens,](#)

Kowloon Bay

The Government today (May 19) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 5.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kowloon Bay (i.e. Block 5 and Block 6, Richland Gardens, Kowloon Bay, see Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around 10am tomorrow (May 20). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11.30pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 10am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes

effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from May 13 to 19, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before May 21, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government will provide food packs for persons subject to compulsory testing, so as to facilitate the meal arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing. In addition, the Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which starts operation at 5.30pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Hospital Authority announces positive patient cases detected via admission screening or testing and clusters of nosocomial COVID-19 infections

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority today (May 19) announced information regarding patients who tested positive via admission screening or testing with patients or staff members identified as close contacts and nosocomial COVID-19 infection cases:

The following are the statistics of patients who tested positive via admission screening or by testing in public hospitals with patients or staff members identified as close contacts:

Hospital/clinic	Number of patients who tested positive	Number of patients identified as close contacts	Number of staff members without appropriate personal protective equipment identified as close contacts
Tuen Mun Hospital	1	1	–

Thorough cleaning and disinfection operations have been performed in the affected areas by the hospital. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the health conditions of patients and staff members, and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.

There have been no clusters of nosocomial infection cases reported in public hospitals today.

[Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2022](#)

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2022) released today (May 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 5.0% in January – March 2022 to 5.4% in February – April 2022. The underemployment rate also increased from 3.1% in January – March 2022 to 3.8% in February – April 2022.

Comparing February – April 2022 with January – March 2022, almost all major economic sectors saw an increase in both the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate. For the unemployment rate, more distinct increases were observed in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; and retail, accommodation and food services sector. As to the underemployment rate, increases were mainly seen in the retail, accommodation and food services sector; transportation sector; education sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

Total employment decreased by around 51 300 from 3 610 500 in January – March 2022 to 3 559 200 in February – April 2022. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 33 700 from 3 799 000 to 3 765 300.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 17 600 from 188 500 in January – March 2022 to 206 100 in February – April 2022. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 25 000 from 117 000 to 142 000.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market deteriorated further in February – April 2022, but the situation showed some stabilisation in the latter part of the period in tandem with the receding local epidemic and revival of local economic activities. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose by 0.4 percentage point over the preceding three-month period to 5.4% in February – April 2022. The underemployment rate also increased by 0.7 percentage point to 3.8%. Total employment fell by 51 300 to 3 559 200, and the number of unemployed persons increased by 17 600 to 206 100."

Analysed by sector, the unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) combined increased by 1.1 percentage points over the preceding three-month period to 10.0% in February – April 2022. Among these sectors, the unemployment rate for food and beverage service activities increased by 1.9 percentage points to 12.9%, and that of the retail sector increased by 0.6 percentage point to 8.3%. The unemployment rates of most other sectors also increased, more notably the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector.

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market should see improvement in the coming months. The receding local epidemic situation and progressive relaxation of social distancing measures, together with the new round of Consumption Voucher Scheme, should render support to business and thus employment of the consumption-related sectors. Other relief measures rolled out by the Government, including the 2022 Employment Support Scheme, would also help improve economic sentiment, support enterprises and keep workers in employment. It is essential for the community to work in unison to support the Government to further stabilise the local epidemic situation. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely."

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Opening Up a New Terrain Online Job Fair on June 7 and 8, 2022. Over 50 employers will participate, offering a large amount of vacancies from various industries. In February – April 2022, the Labour Department (LD) recorded a monthly average of 60 917 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year decrease of 15.9% while an increase of 2.0% over the average figure in January – March 2022. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms such as the Interactive Employment Service website for obtaining such vacancy information.

Further Information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc) and unpaid family workers. Generally speaking, the unemployed population refers to persons who have not had a job or performed any work for pay or profit, have been available for work, and have sought work. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for February – April 2022 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 71 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong. Labour force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving three-month period of February to April 2022.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=D5250021&scode=200). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter October – December 2021 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2022 will be available by end May 2022. Users can also download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).