

Anti-epidemic measures concerning foreign domestic helpers

The Government announced today (May 11) that all foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) working in Hong Kong should receive compulsory COVID-19 testing again in the period from May 15 to May 30. The Government announced at the same time that it would not pursue the suggestion of requiring FDHs to receive recognised COVID-19 vaccines when applying for employment visas.

Compulsory testing

A Government spokesman said, "In view of incidents of FDHs confirmed with infection of COVID-19 with the N501Y mutant strain last month, the Government announced on April 30 that all FDHs working in Hong Kong should receive compulsory testing in the period from May 1 to May 9. In this compulsory testing, more than 340 000 FDHs had been tested, with three FDHs found to be infected with the N501Y mutant strain so far, effectively reducing the chance of silent transmission of the mutant strain in the community."

The spokesman continued, "The N501Y mutant strain has high transmissibility with an incubation period that may last longer than 20 days. For prudence's sake, the Food and Health Bureau will issue another compulsory testing notice for FDHs, requiring FDHs to undergo testing from May 15 to May 30. Same as the previous round of compulsory testing, FDHs who have received two doses of vaccine for 14 days are exempted from receiving the test.

"With the experience gained from the earlier compulsory testing, the Government will increase the booking capacity in the new round of testing, and continue to increase the testing capacity at community testing centres and mobile specimen collection stations, especially the testing capacity on Saturdays and Sundays. We appeal to employers to arrange for FDHs to undergo testing at community testing centres on weekdays as far as possible and make bookings in advance, to prevent FDHs from gathering and queuing for testing on Saturdays and Sundays in particular."

The Government has all along implemented anti-epidemic measures based on risk assessment. The FDH population is significant, at about 370 000. Their job mainly involves taking care of family members, including the elderly and children, etc. If an FDH is infected with the virus, the FDH may infect the employer's family members, or it may even result in cross-household infections. To safeguard public health, the Government finds it necessary to require all FDHs to receive compulsory testing again. The spokesman pointed out that compulsory testing arrangements equally applies to persons in other high-risk industries, such as staff of residential care homes for the elderly, residential care homes for persons with disabilities and nursing homes, and thanked FDHs and employers for their understanding and co-operation.

Any person who fails to comply with compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. 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 order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The Government will strictly follow up on whether relevant persons had complied with the testing notices. The Government reminds exempted FDHs to download their electronic vaccination records or save the printouts of their vaccination records to their mobile phones, or bring along the printouts or copies of their vaccination records, so as to prove eligibility for exemption.

Encourage vaccination

The Government spokesman said, "A suggestion was made earlier that FDHs may be required to receive recognised COVID-19 vaccines when they apply for employment visas. Although this suggestion was based on considerations of safeguarding the community and public health, it aroused numerous opinions and concerns in society. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-king, met with the Consuls General of the Philippines and Indonesia in Hong Kong separately yesterday (May 10) to learn about their views. After consolidating and considering various aspects, the Government decided not to pursue this suggestion."

In view of the threat posed by the mutant strains, it is imperative for people to get vaccinated. While there is still a shortage of COVID-19 vaccines internationally, the two vaccines procured by the Government are sufficient for all Hong Kong people (including FDHs) to get vaccinated. At present, there are still plenty of unutilised quotas every day in the 29 community vaccination centres and over 1 000 private clinics. The Government appeals to all FDHs to receive a vaccination as soon as possible in order to protect their own health and the health of their employers' families and others.

The Government thanks FDHs and employers for their understanding and co-operation with the anti-epidemic measures.

[Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (May 11), seven COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 11 503 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 616 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 155 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 68 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 14 public hospitals and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, among which two patients are in critical condition, two are in serious condition and the remaining 64 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority 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.

The case numbers of the discharged, critical and serious patients are as follows:

Discharged	11731, 11743, 11797, 11801, 11805, 11807, 11808
Critical	6794, 9907
Serious	10358, 11764

[SHA expresses deep sorrow over passing of Ms Che Kuk-hung](#)

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, today (May 11) expressed his sorrow over the passing of Hong Kong bowling athlete Ms Che Kuk-hung. He extended his condolences to Ms Che's family.

Ms Che was an outstanding Hong Kong bowling athlete who won a gold medal in women's singles in the 1986 Asian Games, becoming the first athlete to win a gold medal for the glory of Hong Kong in the Asian Games. She had outstanding achievements including winning a gold medal in women's trios in the Asian Tenpin Bowling Championships in 1992.

"Being a pioneer in the Hong Kong sports sector by attaining remarkable achievements, Ms Che provided tremendous contributions and became a role model for younger generations. Her passing is a great loss for the Hong Kong sports sector and she will be remembered fondly," Mr Tsui said.

Tender of 2-Year Exchange Fund Notes to be held on May 21

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announces that a tender of 2-year Exchange Fund Notes will be held on May 21 (Friday) for settlement on May 24 (Monday), as set out in the tentative issuance schedule announced on February 11. This is to roll over an issue of 2-year Exchange Fund Notes maturing on the same day.

A total of HK\$1,200 million 2-year Notes will be on offer, of which HK\$5 million will be made available for offer to members of the public who wish to submit non-competitive tender bids through Hong Kong Securities Clearing Company Limited (HKSCC). If the Notes reserved for non-competitive tender are under-subscribed, the non-subscribed amount will be added to the portion of notes for competitive tender (initially set at HK\$1,195 million). The Notes will mature on May 24, 2023 and will carry interest at the rate of 0.14 per cent per annum payable semi-annually in arrears.

Members of the public who wish to submit non-competitive tender applications for Notes that are open to HKSCC may do so through Stock Exchange Participants/Brokers, or for those who hold Investor Accounts of the Central Clearing and Settlement System (CCASS) at the HKSCC, directly through HKSCC, for submission to the HKMA for processing. Competitive tender applications for the Notes must be submitted through any of the Eligible Market Makers appointed by the HKMA, with the current published list available on the HKMA's website at www.hkma.gov.hk. Each tender must be for an amount of HK\$50,000 or integral multiples thereof for both competitive and non-competitive tender.

The tender results will be published on the HKMA's website, the Reuters screen (HKMAOOE), and Bloomberg. Applicants who submitted non-competitive tender bids through HKSCC may also obtain the tender results from Stock Exchange Participants/Brokers, or for applicants who hold Investor Accounts at HKSCC's CCASS from the CCASS terminal for CCASS Broker/Custodian/Participants and CCASS Phone System.

HKMA Exchange Fund Note Programme Tender Information

Tender information of 2-Year Exchange Fund Notes:

Issue Number	:	02Y2305
Stock code	:	4085(EFN 0.14 2305)

Tender date and time : May 21, 2021 (Friday)
 : 9.30am to 10.30am

Issue and Settlement Date : May 24, 2021 (Monday)

Amount on offer : HK\$1,200 million
 : (up to HK\$5 million for non-competitive tender)

Commencement of/
 Deadline for
 submission of non-competitive tender bids by
 retail investors through HKSCC : Please refer to requirements as set
 : down by HKSCC

Maturity : Two years

Maturity Date : May 24, 2023 (Wednesday)

Interest Rate : 0.14 per cent p.a.

Interest Payment Dates : November 24, 2021
 : May 24, 2022
 : November 24, 2022
 : May 24, 2023

Tender amount : Each tender must be for an amount of
 : HK\$50,000 or integral multiples
 : thereof for both competitive and
 : non-competitive tender. Members of
 : the public who wish to apply for the
 : Notes through non-competitive
 : tenders that are open to HKSCC may
 : do so through Stock Exchange
 : Participants/ Brokers, or for those
 : who hold Investors Accounts at
 : HKSCC's CCASS, directly through
 : HKSCC. Members of the public who
 : wish to apply for the Notes through
 : competitive tender may only do so
 : through any of the Eligible Market
 : Makers on the current published
 : list.

Other details : Please see Information Memorandum
 : published or approach Eligible
 : Market Makers, HKSCC, or brokers who
 : are Exchange Participants of the
 : Stock Exchange of Hong Kong.

Expected commencement date
of dealing on the Stock : May 25, 2021 (Tuesday)
Exchange of Hong Kong

Price/Yield Table of the new EFN at tender for reference* only :

Yield-to-Maturity	Price	Yield-to-Maturity	Price
-0.86	102.03	0.14	100.00
-0.81	101.92	0.19	99.90
-0.76	101.82	0.24	99.80
-0.71	101.72	0.29	99.70
-0.66	101.62	0.34	99.60
-0.61	101.51	0.39	99.50
-0.56	101.41	0.44	99.40
-0.51	101.31	0.49	99.31
-0.46	101.21	0.54	99.21
-0.41	101.11	0.59	99.11
-0.36	101.01	0.64	99.01
-0.31	100.90	0.69	98.91
-0.26	100.80	0.74	98.81
-0.21	100.70	0.79	98.72
-0.16	100.60	0.84	98.62
-0.11	100.50	0.89	98.52
-0.06	100.40	0.94	98.42
-0.01	100.30	0.99	98.33
0.04	100.20	1.04	98.23
0.09	100.10	1.09	98.13
0.14	100.00	1.14	98.03

* Disclaimer: The information provided here is for reference only. Although extreme care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is accurate and up-to-date, the HKMA does not warrant that all, or any part of, the information provided is accurate in all respects. You are encouraged to conduct your own enquiries to verify any particular piece of information provided on it. The HKMA shall not be liable for any loss or damage suffered as a result of any use or reliance on any of the information provided here.

Results of monthly survey on business situation of small and medium-sized enterprises for April 2021

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 11) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for April 2021.

The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs went up visibly from 44.0 in March 2021 in the contractionary zone to 47.1 in April 2021, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. May 2021) outlook DI on business receipts was 48.9. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for many surveyed sectors increased in April 2021 as compared with previous month, particularly for the retail trade (from 36.2 to 46.4) and import and export trades (from 44.6 to 47.7).

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades increased from 46.4 in March 2021 to 47.9 in April 2021, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. May 2021) was 49.2.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that business sentiment among SMEs improved to a two-year high in April, though remained cautious in overall terms. The sub-index for retail trade increased notably over the preceding month and that for restaurants stayed in the expansionary zone. Meanwhile, those for other sectors saw mixed performance.

The spokesman added that if the global economic recovery sustains and the local epidemic situation remains well-contained, business sentiment can hopefully see further improvement down the road. It is thus essential for the community to work together to keep the epidemic under control and to actively participate in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. The large-scale counter-cyclical measures unveiled by the 2021-22 Budget will also help alleviate the economic pressure faced by enterprises. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

Further information

The Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises aims to provide a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for assessing the short-term business situation faced by SMEs. SMEs covered in this survey refer to establishments with fewer than 50 persons engaged. Respondents were asked to exclude seasonal fluctuations in reporting their views. Based on the views collected from the survey, a set of diffusion indices (including current and outlook diffusion indices) is compiled. A reading above 50 indicates that the business condition is generally favourable, whereas that below 50 indicates otherwise. As for statistics on

the business prospects of prominent establishments in Hong Kong, users may refer to the publication entitled "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey" released by the C&SD.

It should be noted that the results of the survey should be interpreted with care. The survey solicits feedback from a panel sample of about 600 SMEs each month and the survey findings are thus subject to sample size constraint. Views collected from the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in. Besides, in this type of opinion survey on expected business situation, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the business situation accords with the underlying trends. For this survey, main bulk of the data were collected in the last week of the reference month.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey on the Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". Users can download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080015&scode=300).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7246; email: sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk).