

CHP investigates 18 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, March 22, the CHP was investigating 18 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 398 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 397 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, 11 are imported cases, two are local cases with unknown sources while the remaining five cases are epidemiologically linked with local cases.

The CHP is continuing with the epidemiological investigation of the large-scale outbreak involving Ursus Fitness and has coordinated with related Government departments, including the Environmental Protection Department, and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department in conducting a field inspection with expert of the University of Hong Kong this afternoon to Ursus Fitness. Eleven environmental samples were collected, including that from the air-conditioner filters, to further investigate and examine if environmental factors were involved in the outbreak. To prevent the rapid spread of virus within confined spaces, the CHP strongly appeals to operators of fitness centres to pay attention to indoor fresh air intake, and disinfect equipment immediately after each use.

A total of 289 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 8 to 21), including 224 local cases of which 45 are from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

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

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;

- 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.
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Fatal traffic accident in Tsuen Wan

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Tsuen Wan this afternoon (March 22) in which a 56-year-old man died.

At 3.51pm, a private car driven by the 56-year-old man was travelling along Tsing Long Highway towards Tuen Mun. Upon reaching the entrance of Ting Kau Bridge, the private car reportedly rammed into iron railings and then collided with a bus driven by a 37-year-old man.

Sustaining no apparent injuries, the 56-year-old man was rushed to Yan Chai Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 4.48pm.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories South is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers at 3661 1346 or 3661 1344.

Enhancements to Special 100% Loan Guarantee to take effect

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

HKMC Insurance Limited announced that enhancements to the Special 100% Loan Guarantee of the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS) will take effect from March 29 (Monday).

In order to further alleviate the cash flow pressure of small and

medium-sized enterprises, the Financial Secretary announced earlier in the 2021-22 Budget that enhancements will be made to the Special 100% Loan Guarantee, and the application period will be extended to December 31, 2021. Under the enhancement measures, eligible enterprises should have been operating for at least three months as at June 30, 2020, and have suffered at least a 30 per cent decline in sales turnover in any month since February 2020 compared with the monthly average of any preceding quarter from early 2019 to mid-2020 (Note 1). The maximum amount of loan per enterprise will be raised from the total amount of employee wages and rents (Note 2) for 12 months to that for 18 months, or HK\$6 million (originally HK\$5 million), whichever is lower. Meanwhile, the maximum repayment period of the guaranteed loans will be increased from five years to eight years, and the principal moratorium arrangement will be extended from up to 12 months to up to 18 months.

For public enquiries, please call the SFGS Hotline at 2536 0392.

Note 1: Previously, eligible enterprises should have been operating for at least three months as at the end of 2019, and have suffered at least a 30 per cent decline in sales turnover in any month since February 2020 compared with the monthly average of any quarter in 2019.

Note 2: If an enterprise does not have employees as well as business premises, the calculation can be replaced by half of the maximum monthly net income during the period from early 2019 to mid-2020.

[LegCo to debate proposed resolution to amend Rules of Procedure moved under Article 75 of Basic Law](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting on Wednesday (March 24) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, Members will debate a proposed resolution moved under Article 75 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council. The proposed resolution, moved by Mr Paul Tse, is set out in Appendix 1.

On Government Bills, the Air Pollution Control (Amendment) Bill 2021, Crimes (Amendment) Bill 2021, the Free-Flow Tolling (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2021, the Securities and Futures and Companies Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2021 and the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2021 will be introduced into the Council for the First

Reading and the Second Reading. The Second Reading debate on the Bills will be adjourned.

On Government motion, the Secretary for Security will move a motion on taking forward the follow-up tasks of implementing co-location arrangement at the Huanggang Port. The motion is set out in Appendix 2.

On other Members' motions, Mr Kenneth Lau will move a motion on formulating a comprehensive rural development policy. The motion is set out in Appendix 3. Mr Steven Ho will move an amendment to Mr Kenneth Lau's motion.

Ms Elizabeth Quat will move a motion on thoroughly reforming the subject of Liberal Studies. The motion is set out in Appendix 4. Dr Priscilla Leung and Mr Kwok Wai-keung will move separate amendments to Ms Elizabeth Quat's motion.

In addition, Members will also ask the Government 22 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

CHP closely monitors human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) in Guangxi

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (March 22) closely monitoring a human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) in Guangxi, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involved a 50-year-old man living in Hechi in Guangxi. He developed symptoms on February 16, and was admitted for treatment on February 17 due to severe pneumonia. The patient passed away on March 2.

From 2014 to date, 30 human cases of avian influenza A(H5N6) have been reported by Mainland health authorities.

"All novel influenza A infections, including H5N6, are notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Travellers to the Mainland or other affected areas must avoid visiting

wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. They should be alert to the presence of backyard poultry when visiting relatives and friends. They should also avoid purchasing live or freshly slaughtered poultry, and avoid touching poultry/birds or their droppings. They should strictly observe personal and hand hygiene when visiting any place with live poultry.

Travellers returning from affected areas should consult a doctor promptly if symptoms develop, and inform the doctor of their travel history for prompt diagnosis and treatment of potential diseases. It is essential to tell the doctor if they have seen any live poultry during travel, which may imply possible exposure to contaminated environments. This will enable the doctor to assess the possibility of avian influenza and arrange necessary investigations and appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

While local surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The public should maintain strict personal, hand, food and environmental hygiene and take heed of the advice below when handling poultry:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings;
- When buying live chickens, do not touch them and their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume the eggs immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;
- Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;
- Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to the toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and
- Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, when going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking care of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

The public may visit the CHP's pages for more information: the [avian influenza](#) page, the weekly [Avian Influenza Report, global statistics and affected areas](#) of avian influenza, the [Facebook Page](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).