

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 22) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From March 14 to 20, three community-acquired LD cases were reported, including:

1. A male patient, aged 57 with underlying illnesses, who lives on 30 Tam Kung Road, Kowloon City;
2. A male patient, aged 68 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Fan Tin Tsuen, San Tin; and
3. A female patient, aged 45 with good past health, who lives in Tower 1, Fleur Pavilia, 1 Kai Yuen Street, North Point.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of March 20, seven LD cases had been reported this year. In 2020 and 2019, there were 104 and 105 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and

- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

United Christian Hospital announces patient tests preliminary positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for United Christian Hospital (UCH) made the following announcement today (March 22) concerning a patient who tested preliminary positive for COVID-19:

An 88-year-old male patient was admitted to the UCH Accident and Emergency Department (AED) in the early morning of March 22 due to shortness of breath and fever. Healthcare staff arranged an admission screening COVID-19 test for the patient according to established procedures and the test result was preliminary positive. He was transferred to the isolation ward for further treatment and is currently in stable condition.

The hospital's infection control team conducted contact tracing accordingly. As a male patient who stayed in the same cubicle in the AED with the index patient did not wear his surgical mask properly, he was identified as close contact and will be quarantined. All staff members working in the AED were equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment in accordance with infection control guidelines. No aerosol generating procedures had been performed during that period. Therefore, none of the staff members are being classified as close contacts so far, while contact tracing is still underway.

The hospital has arranged a thorough cleaning and disinfection of the areas in the AED. UCH will continue to closely monitor the health condition of its staff and patients, and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection about the latest situation.

Public housing residents convicted by court for making false statements knowingly and neglecting to furnish particulars specified in requisition

of declaration form

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (March 22) reminded residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates to declare truthfully their income and assets.

A family of three members living at Hau Tak Estate in Tseung Kwan O under a Fixed Term Licence submitted an income and assets declaration form in May 2020 to apply for granting of tenancy by the reason of their total household net asset value not exceeding the asset limit for three consecutive months. In the application form, the licensee and his wife declared that they each had about \$100,000 in bank deposits and that they did not have any stock. Subsequent investigation revealed that the licensee and his wife each had about \$400,000 in bank deposits and also held listed shares with a market value of about \$1 million. The total household net asset value was as high as \$5 million, which had already exceeded 100 times the public rental housing income limits in 2019-20 and 2020-21 (i.e. \$2.31 million and \$2.45 million respectively) and they were ineligible for renting the PRH flat.

The licensee and his wife were prosecuted by the Housing Department for making false statements knowingly and neglecting to furnish information specified in the declaration form, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) and Section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance. They were previously convicted by the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Court, which considered a fine as punishment could not reflect the gravity of the offence. After making reference to the probation report, the defendants were each sentenced of four weeks' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months).

The spokesman said that households living in PRH should complete their income and asset declaration forms accurately, which forms the foundation for the assessment of rent and their eligibilities for continuing residence. Before making the declarations, households should read the content and completion guidelines of the income and asset declaration form carefully and compute their income and assets in accordance with the methods specified. Otherwise, they may be prosecuted for making false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and imprisonment for six months), or be prosecuted for neglecting to furnish information as specified in a declaration form, contrary to Section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for three months). Notwithstanding the above, the HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information or even recover the PRH units.

Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at four buildings in Central and Western District

The Central and Western District Office together with the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, the Central District of the Hong Kong Police Force and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) conducted an enforcement operation today (March 22) at four buildings in Central and Western District, which were included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation started at around 7am and ended at around 10.30am today.

Starting from around 7am today, residents of Woodlands Court, Woodland Court and Woodlands Terrace at 1-4 Woodlands Terrace and Woodland House at 9A-9C Castle Road, Central and Western District, were requested to provide the SMS notification received through a mobile phone or related certification containing the results of COVID-19 tests, to show that they had taken such tests as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notice of the four buildings within the specified period issued by the Government earlier on. The Government arranged for staff to verify the testing certifications of the residents at the entrances/exits of the four buildings, and conducted checks in the buildings to verify whether residents had undergone testing in compliance with the requirements.

During the operation, test records of around 130 residents were checked. Among them, 10 persons were found to have violated the compulsory testing notice. The Government has issued fixed penalties of \$5,000 and/or compulsory testing orders to them, requiring them to undergo testing within a specified period. Non-compliance with a compulsory testing order is an offence, and offenders are liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety. Persons subject to testing under a compulsory testing notice should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

The Government wishes to thank the many residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notice for their co-operation to fight against the virus together. The Government will continue to enforce the law strictly. All persons subject to compulsory testing should comply with the compulsory testing notice. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notice may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will also be

issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Non-compliance with the order is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Central and Western District Office is grateful for the support and co-operation of the CHP, the Police and the AMS to enable the enforcement action to be carried out smoothly. The Government understands that the enforcement process may cause some inconvenience to the residents, but hopes that the residents can understand.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (March 22), 26 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 10 901 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 648 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 184 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 245 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 20 public hospitals and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, among which 10 patients are in critical condition, 10 are in serious condition and the remaining 225 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.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case numbers
Discharged	10844, 10919, 11064, 11076, 11083, 11089, 11136, 11137, 11139, 11140, 11141, 11147, 11151, 11156, 11169, 11177, 11207, 11213, 11216, 11227, 11234, 11253, 11270, 11284, 11337, 11363
Critical	1989, 3496, 6607, 6794, 8018, 8078, 9612, 9907, 10358, 10942
Serious	6386, 7468, 8221, 9055, 9135, 10367, 10585, 10984, 11040, 11055