

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in UK and Poland suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 18) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Fife of Scotland in the United Kingdom (UK), and a notification from the General Veterinary Inspectorate of Poland about an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Tarnogórski District of Śląskie Region in Poland, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 11 130 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 420 000 poultry eggs from the UK, and about 13 500 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 39.08 million poultry eggs from Poland last year.

"The CFS has contacted the British and Polish authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

2021 Voter Registration Campaign Launched

The 2021 Voter Registration Campaign has been launched today (February 18). The campaign aims to remind registered electors to update their registration particulars with the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) in a timely manner and to encourage eligible persons to register as electors.

Change of registration particulars

The REO attaches great importance to the accuracy of the register of electors. If there are any changes in registration particulars of registered electors (individual or body electors), the electors concerned should, using the specified form, notify the REO on or before April 2 in accordance with the electoral law. Otherwise, the relevant changes in registration particulars will not be reflected in the final registers (i.e. final

registers for geographical constituencies, functional constituencies and Election Committee subsectors) to be published in July this year.

Electors applying for a change of registered address are required to submit address proof at the same time to assist the REO in verifying the electors' address information. Electors who are registered tenants of public rental housing under the Housing Department or the Hong Kong Housing Society are exempted from the requirement of submitting address proof when they apply for change of registered addresses.

When applying for replacement of a smart identity card, a registered elector may choose whether to give consent for the Immigration Department (ImmD) to transfer their personal particulars to the REO for verifying particulars on the registers of electors. As the verification and follow-up process takes time to complete, the REO recommends electors, when they give consent to the ImmD for transferring their personal particulars to the REO, to submit the specified forms for the applications for change of particulars as well, so as not to miss the statutory deadline of April 2 for change of registration particulars.

After verifying the relevant information, if the REO finds that the principal residential addresses of electors are different from those recorded in the registers of electors, the department will issue letters to the electors to request them to provide address proof for verifying and completing the applications for change of registered address.

The REO reminds registered electors who have received letters from the REO to read the letter as soon as possible and follow the letter's instruction to respond before the deadline.

Encouraging eligible persons to register

The REO encourages Hong Kong permanent residents who hold an identity document, have reached age 18, are ordinarily residing in Hong Kong and have yet to register as an elector to submit new registration applications using the specified form by the statutory deadline of May 2 so that they can be included in the final registers to be published in July this year and be able to vote in elections (including the Legislative Council General Election to be held this year). When registering as an elector of geographical constituencies, the person will also become an elector in the District Council (second) functional constituency, commonly known as the "Super District Council".

The REO calls on members of the public to provide their telephone numbers and email addresses to the REO when submitting their voter registration applications so that the REO can contact them more promptly and efficiently if necessary. By doing so they may also receive election mail from candidates via email.

The Announcements in the Public Interest of the Voter Registration Campaign will run on television, radio and the Internet from today.

Promotional messages will also be displayed on websites, in mobile applications, at bus stops, in MTR stations and on other means of public transport. Promotional items such as banners and posters will also be placed at the exterior of government buildings and in all districts to encourage eligible persons to register as electors.

Members of the public can check at any time their registration status and registration particulars by logging in to the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (www.voterinfo.gov.hk) or calling the REO hotline (2891 1001).

Application forms for new registration and change of registration particulars can be obtained from the REO, the District Offices and the management offices of public housing estates. They can also be downloaded from the voter registration website (www.voterregistration.gov.hk). Completed forms can be submitted to the REO by post (13/F, Kowloonbay International Trade & Exhibition Centre, 1 Trademart Drive, Kowloon Bay), by fax (2891 1180), by email (form@reo.gov.hk) or via the REO e-Form Upload Platform (www.reo-form.gov.hk).

The REO urges members of the public to submit applications for change of registration particulars and new registration as early as possible. For enquiries, please call the REO hotline at 2891 1001.

Full resumption of court business and greater use of “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (February 18) announced that having regard to the latest public health situation, the Judiciary will fully resume court business in an incremental manner from February 22 (Monday).

To ensure that the courts can continue to carry on business as safely as circumstances permit, the Judiciary will continue to put in place appropriate social distancing and crowd management measures.

To enhance protection of court users against COVID-19 infection following the resumption of normal court business, the Judiciary will be making a greater use of the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app as part of the entry requirement of court premises in two stages from February 22 and March 1 (Monday) respectively.

Court proceedings

Court proceedings will fully resume from March 1 as far as possible. Subject to the court's directions, court hearings may run for the whole day instead of only half days. However, for social distancing and crowd management purposes, proceedings involving a large number of court users will continue to be fixed to be heard at appropriate times and intervals. If a hearing cannot be held as scheduled, the relevant parties have been or will be notified separately.

Registries and accounts offices

From February 22, the services of registries and accounts offices at various levels of court will resume as normal, including the opening hours (i.e. from 8.45am to 1pm and from 2pm to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

Court users may continue to go directly to the relevant registries and accounts offices for services. Crowd management measures will be put in place where necessary throughout the opening hours for social distancing purposes.

The Judiciary appeals to all court users to avoid going to the registries/accounts offices at peak hours, e.g. late mornings and late afternoons.

Supportive offices of the Judiciary

From February 22 onwards, the other offices that provide support services to court users and the public will also resume their normal services. Their normal operating hours are shown in the Annex.

"LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app

Following resumption of normal services at court premises, all persons entering the Judiciary premises will be requested to use the app in two stages:

(a) In Stage 1, starting from February 22, all persons who enter the Judiciary premises will be encouraged to use the app. Persons who do not use the app will still be allowed to enter the premises but will be reminded to record their whereabouts through their own means;

(b) In Stage 2, starting from March 1, all persons who enter the Judiciary premises will be asked to use the app. Those who fail to do so will be asked to have their names, contact numbers and the dates and times of their visits recorded. The data collected will be used to facilitate the work of the Government in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and related purposes, and may be provided to the relevant government departments for epidemiological investigations and contact tracing. All persons who do not use the app and refuse to have their contact information recorded will be

denied entry to the Judiciary premises.

While the Judiciary will make every effort to minimise inconvenience to court users, it is inevitable that the measure will mean more time required for court users to gain access to the Judiciary premises. As such, court users are advised to download and learn to use the app before going to the Judiciary premises and arrive in court earlier, particularly during the peak hours in the early morning or after the lunch break.

Preventive and crowd management measures

The Judiciary will continue to maintain other preventive measures including mandatory body temperature checks, requiring all people to wear surgical masks at all times unless otherwise directed by judges or judicial officers and reducing seating capacity of courtrooms, court lobbies, registries and accounts offices.

Any court users including parties and legal representatives who have a fever or a high body temperature; who are subject to any quarantine requirement, medical surveillance or compulsory testing while waiting for test results; or who have preliminary tested positive or tested positive for COVID-19 are not allowed to enter Judiciary premises. They should apply to the court as soon as practicable for permission of absence or inform the court with reasons for absence as appropriate.

For enquiries regarding the above arrangements, court users may call the following hotlines during office hours:

- General Information: 2869 0869
- Court of Final Appeal: 2123 0123
- High Court: 2523 2212
- Probate: 2840 1683
- Competition Tribunal: 2825 0426
- District Court: 2845 5696
- Family Court: 2840 1218
- Lands Tribunal: 2771 3034
- Labour Tribunal: 2625 0020
- Small Claims Tribunal: 2877 4068
- Magistrates' Courts: 2677 8373
- Obscene Articles Tribunal: 3916 6303
- Coroner's Court: 3916 6204
- Bailiff Section: 2802 7510
- Court Language Section: 2388 1364

For enquiries regarding the technical or operational details of the app, court users may call the government hotline at 1823.

The Judiciary will continue to post updated information, including Daily Cause Lists, all arrangements in relation to Judiciary business and advice to

court users, on the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk). Court users are advised to check the website for updated information before they go to court.

CHP investigates eight additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, February 18, the CHP was investigating eight additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 10 821 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 10 820 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, three are local cases with unknown sources while five cases are epidemiologically linked with a local case.

The first case with unknown sources involves a 49-year-old woman (case number: 10816) who developed sore throat and cough on February 11. She attended Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital on February 16. She is a housewife.

The second case with unknown sources involves a 43-year-old woman (case number: 10817) who developed fever on February 14. She attended Kwong Wah Hospital on February 16. She is a housewife.

The third case with unknown sources involves a 54-year-old woman (case number: 10820) who developed fever, sore throat and headache on February 12. She went to a Community Testing Centre for testing on February 16. She is a staff of Yuen Yuen Nursing Home Cum Day Care Centre for the Elderly (Shun Lee Estate). She last went to work on February 15.

A total of 282 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (February 4 to 17), including 236 local cases of which 83 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 public are also urged to seek

medical attention early if symptoms develop.

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, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. 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 drainoutlet (U-trap) to ensure

environmental hygiene;

- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
 - 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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Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at eight buildings in To Kwa Wan

The Kowloon City District Office together with Kowloon City Police District, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), conducted an enforcement operation today (February 18) at eight buildings in To Kwa Wan, which were included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation started at around 7.40am and ended at around 11.10am today.

Starting from around 7.40am today, residents of On Ping Building, On Wo Yuen (Phase II), 39 Mei King Street; On Hong Building, On Wo Yuen (Phase II), 55 Mei King Street; as well as buildings located at 9 & 11, 13 & 15, 17 & 19, 21 & 23, 25 & 27 and 29 & 31 Mei King Street in To Kwa Wan, 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 covering relevant 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 eight 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 790 residents were checked. Among them, around 65 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 Kowloon City District Office is grateful for the support and co-operation of the Police, the CHP 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.