

WSD to resume most of its public services

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) announced today (February 17) that it will resume most of its public services upon the implementation of targeted measures to reduce social contact, and measures for infection prevention of COVID-19. The arrangements for affected public services of the WSD commencing tomorrow (February 18) are as follows:

- * Upon its reopening tomorrow, the H2OPE Centre (Water Resources Public Education Centre) will implement special arrangements. To avoid gathering of crowds and maintain social distancing, the number of admissions to the Centre will be limited. If the number of visitors inside the Centre has reached the limit, admissions will only be allowed when there are visitors leaving the Centre. Children aged under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Some interactive exhibits and all guided tours of the Centre will be suspended;
- * The "Excursion with Water Save Dave" Visiting Programme for individuals and groups will continue to be cancelled; and
- * Routine meter readings at high-risk locations are suspended. For affected customers, the WSD will issue water bills to them after resumption of routine meter readings with water consumption calculated according to the last and the latest actual meter readings for the combined period of the relevant billing cycles for issue of the water bills. Due to the deferred billing, the water bills issued by then may cover water charges of two billing periods (including deferred water charges) and the amount payable may be more than the usual water bills covering only one billing period. Please refer to the [WSD website](#) for details of the above calculation of water charges.

The arrangements above will remain effective until further notice. As there may be a higher demand for various public services at the beginning of service resumption, the waiting time for public services at WSD Customer Enquiry Centres (CECs) and the Document Management Centre (DMC) may be lengthened. To reduce social contact, an appeal is also made to the public to minimise visiting the CECs and DMC in person unless necessary. The public should consider filing enquiries as well as requests for service through the Customer Services Hotline 2824 5000 or by email (wsdinfo@wsd.gov.hk).

At the same time, the WSD appeals to the public for using the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app when visiting WSD offices and venues in order to record their whereabouts, thereby minimising the risk of further transmission of the virus.

Two persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Two men were sentenced by magistrates' courts today (February 17) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (the Regulation).

The first case involved a man aged 65, who was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he left the place of quarantine on March 31, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer and was stopped by an immigration officer at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point. He was charged with contravening Sections 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 14 days.

The second case involved a man aged 61, who was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he had left the place of quarantine and taken off his wristband on November 28, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with two counts of contravening sections 8(1), 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for two months for each of the two charges, which are to run concurrently.

Pursuant to the Regulation, starting from February 8, 2020, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), starting from December 25, 2020, all persons arriving in Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival in Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that breaching a compulsory quarantine order is a criminal offence that the Government will not tolerate, and solemnly reminded the public to comply with the Regulation. As of today, a total of 109 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to 14 weeks or a fine of up to \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.

Supplemental Arrangement Concerning Mutual Enforcement of Arbitral Awards between the Mainland and the HKSAR: Amendments proposed for Arbitration Ordinance

The Government will introduce legislative amendments to the Arbitration Ordinance (Cap. 609) to fully implement the Supplemental Arrangement Concerning Mutual Enforcement of Arbitral Awards between the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Supplemental Arrangement) signed between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China on November 27, 2020.

The purpose of signing the Supplemental Arrangement is to amend the Arrangement Concerning Mutual Enforcement of Arbitral Awards between the Mainland and the HKSAR (Arrangement) which came into effect on February 1, 2000, and bring it more fully in line with the current practice of international arbitration. The Supplemental Arrangement amends the Arrangement in the following aspects:

- (a) express inclusion of the term "recognition" when referring to enforcement of arbitral awards in the Arrangement for greater certainty;
- (b) express provision to clarify that a party may apply for preservation measures before or after the court's acceptance of an application to enforce an arbitral award for greater certainty;
- (c) aligning the definition of the scope of arbitral awards with the prevalent international approach of "seat of arbitration" under the New York Convention; and
- (d) removal of the previous restriction of the Arrangement, allowing parties to make simultaneous applications to both the courts of the Mainland and the HKSAR for enforcement of an arbitral award.

It is not necessary to enact new legislation or amend existing legislation in Hong Kong to implement the above Amendments (a) and (b), while the implementation of Amendments (c) and (d) will require necessary amendments to the Arbitration Ordinance. The implementation of the Supplemental Arrangement in full will be conducive to the promotion of the development of Hong Kong's legal and dispute resolution services. Hong Kong's status as an international legal hub for legal, deal-making and dispute resolution services will be further enhanced.

The relevant Arbitration (Amendment) Bill 2021 will be gazetted this Friday (February 19) and introduced into the Legislative Council on February 24, 2021. The Bill will also update the Schedule to the Arbitration (Parties to New York Convention) Order (Cap. 609 sub. leg. A) and make minor textual amendments to the Arbitration Ordinance.

CHP investigates 16 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 17, the CHP was investigating 16 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 10 813 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 10 812 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, four are imported cases.

A total of 285 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (February 3 to 16), including 243 local cases of which 80 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).

In view of the latest epidemic developments in the Mainland, the previous arrangement to provide specimen collection containers to inbound travellers arriving via land boundary control points who have been to Guangxi in the past 14 days will be cancelled from today. These travellers, if they are not exempted persons, are subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days at a designated place (home or other accommodation) upon arrival in Hong Kong. The arrangement of distributing specimen collection containers to inbound travellers who have been to Heilongjiang Province, Beijing, Hebei Province, Shanxi Province, Jilin Province, Shaanxi Province, Shanghai and Shandong Province in the past 14 days arriving via land boundary control points, which has come into effect earlier, remains unchanged.

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 drain outlet (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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Transport Department's special arrangements for licence renewals on Budget Day

To align with the Government's announcement to fully resume normal public services with effect from tomorrow (February 18), a spokesman for the Transport Department (TD) said today (February 17) that the TD will fully resume licensing services on the same date.

To avoid members of the public from rushing to submit applications for renewal of expiring and expired vehicle and driving licences before Budget Day, the TD will implement the following arrangements:

- * All vehicle licences eligible for renewal on or before Budget Day (February 24), i.e. vehicles that are registered at the time of renewal and with licence expiry dates falling on or before June 23, can be renewed at the present rate, whether for four months or 12 months, at any time up to and including June 23.
- * All full Hong Kong driving licences and driving instructor's licences eligible for renewal on or before Budget Day (February 24), i.e. those expiring on or before June 23 and those that have expired for less than three years at the time of renewal, can be renewed at the present rate at any time up to and including June 23.
- * The special arrangements only apply to the applications for renewal of vehicle licences, full driving licences and driving instructor's licences that meet the conditions above. They do not apply to any other licensing services.

"It is not necessary for eligible licence holders to rush to the TD

licensing offices to renew their licences on speculation that those licence fees may increase in the coming Budget. The aforementioned arrangements are not related to the content of the Budget, on which the TD has no information," the spokesman stressed.