

CHP investigates 21 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 11, the CHP was investigating 21 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 10 732 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 10 731 confirmed cases and one probable case).

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

A total of 428 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (January 28 to February 10), including 387 local cases of which 123 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 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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Official Receiver's Office to resume normal public services starting from February 18

The Official Receiver's Office (ORO) announced today (February 11) that it will resume normal public services from next Thursday (February 18) with continuation of targeted measures to reduce social contact and application of infection control measures.

All offices of the ORO will be open from 8.30am to 5.45pm from Monday to Friday. For details on the office hours of specific public services, please visit the ORO's website at www.oro.gov.hk/eng/contactus/officehrs.htm. As there may be a higher demand for the public services at the beginning of service resumption, the waiting and processing times for the services provided by the ORO may be longer.

For the delivery of documents to the ORO, the public may make use of the ORO's designated drop-in box on the Deck Floor of Queensway Government Offices. They can also make use of the electronic services of the ORO and contact the ORO by:

1. telephone (hotline number: 2867 2448);
2. email (oroadmin@oro.gov.hk); or
3. fax (fax number: 3105 1814).

As for the meetings of creditors, meetings of contributories and adjournment thereof, creditors and contributories are recommended to lodge their proxy with the ORO by way of fax at 3105 1814 and avoid attending the meetings in person. The proxy forms can be accessed at the ORO's website (www.oro.gov.hk/eng/pforms/pforms.htm). Members of the public are also advised not to attend such meetings unless it is absolutely necessary.

For any enquiries, please contact the ORO through its hotline at 2867 2448.

Companies Registry to resume normal public services starting from February

The Companies Registry announced today (February 11) that it will resume normal public services from February 18 while continuing to implement targeted social distancing and infection control measures.

With effect from February 18, the opening hours of the Registry's counter services will be as follows:

13/F and 14/F, Queensway Government Offices and
12/F, One Kowloon, Kowloon Bay

Monday to Friday
8.45am to 5.30pm

To achieve social distancing with a view to reducing the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the community, the Registry advises customers to continue to deliver documents electronically or by post. The Registry's services on registration of documents and public search services will continue to be provided electronically through the e-Registry (www.eregistry.gov.hk), the Cyber Search Centre (www.icris.cr.gov.hk) and the website of the Registry for Trust and Company Service Providers (www.tcsp.cr.gov.hk).

Please check the latest announcements on the Registry's website at www.cr.gov.hk for details.

For enquiries, please call 2867 2600 or contact the Registry by email at crenq@cr.gov.hk.

Points of sale of New Year flowers to close at midnight today

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (February 11) that the 15 points of sale of New Year flowers will cease operation at midnight today. Members of the public purchasing New Year flowers must leave by midnight. Venue users should, in accordance with the User Agreement, clear their sales paraphernalia as soon as possible after the end of operation hours. They should also remove the stall structures such as scaffoldings and marquees, and arrange for vehicles to remove them from the venues by 7am tomorrow (February 12).

To make anti-epidemic efforts effective, the FEHD is strictly enforcing various anti-epidemic measures at all points of sale this year, and at the same time monitoring the admission to and exit from the points of sale and controlling footfall with the use of technology, with a view to avoiding the risk of mass gatherings and assisting the public to enter the points of sale in an orderly manner.

The spokesman said, "The footfall and the waiting status of the 15 points of sale will continue to be displayed in a 'Green, Amber and Red Lights' format on-site, on the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/lmyf2021/selling_point.html) and on the Transport Department's 'HKeMobility' app. A green light means there are few people inside the point of sale and that ticketing is not required, an amber light indicates an increase in footfall and that waiting is required, and a red light represents a large number of people awaiting admission and that a longer waiting time would be needed."

When the footfall at an individual point of sale increases (i.e. amber or red light), only members of the public with a ticket will be admitted to the point of sale. The FEHD will activate a ticketing system in which the public may get a ticket on-site or obtain an e-ticket through the mobile app that can be downloaded for free. One may enter the point of sale with a ticket within 60 minutes after the ticket number is called. Each ticket will cover no more than two persons. Under normal circumstances, ticketing services will cease 45 minutes prior to the closure of the points of sale. The FEHD may also suspend the ticketing services if the ground situation requires.

The spokesman reminded the public to complete their transactions expeditiously and leave the points of sale after buying New Year flowers to minimise the gathering of people. All persons entering the points of sale must observe the ground rules including conducting body temperature screening before entering the points of sale and persons with symptoms will be refused entry. A mask must be worn when entering and within a point of sale, and eating, drinking and smoking are not allowed at the points of sale. The "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code is displayed at the entrances of and inside all points of sale for members of the public to scan and record their visits.

For more details on the points of sale, please visit the FEHD website or call the FEHD hotline at 2868 0000.

[Twenty-one persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations \(with](#)

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The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations codenamed "Twilight" and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force to combat illegal employment activities at the Lunar New Year markets from February 7 to yesterday (February 10). A total of 16 suspected illegal workers, four suspected employers and a suspected aider and abettor were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 22 target locations including a car washing company, a garbage collection depot, an industrial building, a logistics centre, a residential flat, restaurants, a store and vegetable stalls. The suspected illegal workers comprised 12 men and four women, aged 25 to 68. Among them, four men were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. In addition, two men and two women were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards and one man and one woman were suspected of using and being in possession of Hong Kong identity cards related to other people. Meanwhile, one man and three women, aged 37 to 59, were suspected of employing the suspected illegal workers. In addition, a woman suspected of aiding and abetting a person who breached his condition of stay in Hong Kong was arrested.

In addition, during the anti-illegal worker operations at the Lunar New Year markets, enforcement officers raided target stalls at seven Lunar New Year markets in Causeway Bay, Kwai Chung, Sha Tin, Sheung Shui, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long. Apart from mounting enforcement operations, ImmD officers also distributed leaflets to the stall keepers to remind them not to employ illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

