

Prince of Wales Hospital announces a clerk tested positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for the Prince of Wales Hospital (PWH) made the following announcement today (February 5) regarding a clerk who has tested positive for COVID-19:

A clerk of the Department of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care developed symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection on January 25. She underwent a deep throat saliva test on February 3. The test result available today was positive for COVID-19. She has been admitted to the Community Treatment Facility.

Upon learning the test result, hospital infection control team conducted contact tracing. It was noted that the last duty day of the clerk was February 3. She is mainly responsible for clerical duties and has no contact with patients. She had been wearing surgical masks during work. No patient was identified as a close contact. Three staff members sitting close to her in the same office were identified as close contacts and will be quarantined. COVID-19 tests have been arranged for them and the test results are negative.

As a precautionary measure, the hospital has arranged COVID-19 tests for another four staff members in the same office. The test results are negative.

Thorough cleansing and disinfection have been conducted at the office. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the health condition of staff and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest progress.

Public attendance arrangements for forthcoming Court of Final Appeal hearing

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

As indicated in the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) website, the CFA will deliver the judgment for a case concerning the question of bail under the National Security Law on February 9 (next Tuesday). The hearing is expected to be relatively short.

In light of the crowded situation outside the CFA building on February 1 (Monday), the Judiciary will make some adjustments to the arrangements regarding public attendance.

A larger number of seats (around 80) will be reserved for members of the public. These seats will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. No admission tickets will be distributed.

Courts users who wish to attend the hearing will be required to line up at designated areas outside the CFA Building. To ensure orderly arrangements and fairness, no queue-jumping and no queuing for others will be allowed. Court users should follow the instructions of the Judiciary staff and security personnel.

Targeted Groups can make appointments for free COVID-19 testing service

â€‹The Food and Health Bureau announced today (February 5) that the Government will continue to provide one-off free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to all foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) and construction site workers in Hong Kong, and expand such arrangement to security and guarding personnel. Eligible persons may make booking for testing service online starting today.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The Government started to provide one-off free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to FDHs and construction site workers at community testing centres through online booking in December last year and January 2021 respectively. The response has been positive. Having considered the ongoing epidemic situation in Hong Kong, we considered it necessary to expand and extend the relevant testing arrangements.

"The Government will regularly review the coverage of relevant targeted groups based on the latest epidemic risk assessment."

"The free testing service will be available until end February. We encourage eligible targeted groups to actively participate in the free voluntary testing to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers. The FDHs and construction site workers who have received testing in last round's arrangement can make booking again. Eligible persons can choose a suitable time slot for testing taking into account their own needs. If the eligible persons have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo free testing provided by the Government as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the community testing centres."

Eligible persons should make advance booking for the free testing service via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). Those who did not make an appointment have to pay for the testing service at \$240.

The community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm ([Opening hours](#) will be slightly adjusted during the Lunar New Year). Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when the testing centres close in the afternoon and at night. When arriving at the community testing centre at the designated time slot, eligible persons should present identity document used at the time of booking (such as Hong Kong identity card or passport) and the SMS booking confirmation for verification. Construction site workers should also present their construction worker registration card issued by the Construction Industry Council while the security and guarding personnel should present security personnel permit for verification.

The free voluntary testing service will be offered from February 6 till February 28. During the period, each eligible person can receive free testing service once only. Participants will be notified by SMS through their mobile phones if the test result is negative. Should any specimen be tested preliminary positive, it will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

In addition to attending the community testing centres for testing, citizens can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including obtaining a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, MTR stations or designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points. For details on testing means other than community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html.

Government further tightens testing and isolation arrangements for exempted persons

The Government today (February 5) announced that the testing and isolation arrangements for exempted persons, including air crew members, sea crew members of goods vessels entering Hong Kong for cargo operations and other exempted persons, will be tightened with effect from February 20 (Saturday).

The Government spokesman reiterated that it is considered necessary to further tighten the epidemic control measures on all inbound travellers comprehensively based on the latest prevention risk assessment in view of the development and severity of the global epidemic situation. With effect from February 20, all persons exempted from compulsory quarantine in accordance with the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) and Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), including air crew members, sea crew members of goods vessels entering Hong Kong for cargo operations and other exempted persons, must be subject to certain conditions as detailed at Annex 1. The key tightening measures are summarised as follows:

Air crew members

- All air crew members must be subject to "test-and-hold" arrangement (i.e. undergo testing and wait for the result at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) or designated location)
- All air crew members who have stayed in any places outside China during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong (but have not stayed in Group A specified places under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) (hereinafter "Group A specified places")) must self-isolate at the airport hotel (i.e. Headland Hotel or Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel) arranged by airlines until their next duty flight after undergoing testing
- If the aforementioned air crew members are local based crew who wish to leave the airport area, they must self-isolate at designated quarantine hotel for 14 days before entering the local community and be subject to testing on the 12th day following their arrival. They must also be subject to seven-day medical surveillance afterwards, with testing on the 15th and 19th or 20th day following their arrival, before operating again. Meanwhile, freight crew who have laid over in Anchorage, Alaska, of the United States of America, who are subject to closed-loop management in segregation from the local community (see Note) during the layover, will be exempted and they will not be subject to self-isolation at designated quarantine hotel. They will still be subject to 21-day medical surveillance

Signing-off sea crew members for crew change of goods vessels (for goods vessels that enter Hong Kong for cargo operations only)

- For goods vessels which have called at the ports of any places outside China during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong (but have not stayed in Group A specified places), those signing-off sea crew for the purpose of crew change must possess a negative result of SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test done at an ISO15189-accredited laboratory or a laboratory recognised by the Government where the laboratory is located within 72 hours prior to the vessel's scheduled time of arrival at Hong Kong; or the shipping companies/agents should arrange the signing-off

sea crew to take a SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test by one of the recognised testing institutions in Hong Kong, and these crew members will need to stay on board until their negative results are available

- If the aforementioned goods vessels signing-off sea crew members are Hong Kong residents and will stay in Hong Kong after signing off, in addition to complying with the above conditions, they must use the point-to-point transportation to travel to designated quarantine hotels from designated pick-up points, and undergo 21-day compulsory quarantine as with other inbound travelers

Other exempted persons

- All other exempted persons must be subject to "test-and-hold" arrangement (i.e. undergo testing and wait for the result at HKIA or designated location) and undergo repeated testing during their stay in Hong Kong
- Except Consul Generals or representatives in Hong Kong and government officials at equivalent/higher level, all other government officials carrying out governmental duties who have stayed in any places outside China (but have not stayed in Group A specified places) during 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong must be subject to self-isolation for 21 days at an accommodation arranged by respective organisations. They must also be subject to repeated testing during the self-isolation period

As for exempted persons who have stayed in Group A specified places, the isolation arrangement tightened by the Government in December last year and on January 23 this year will carry on. All exempted persons (including air crew members) having stayed in Group A specified places in the past 21 days must be subject to self-isolation at designated quarantine hotels for 21 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. They must also be subject to "test-and-hold" arrangement and undergo testing on the 12th and 19th or 20th day upon arrival in Hong Kong. Currently, Group A specified places include Brazil, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

In addition, to further mitigate exempted persons' contact with the local community during the exemption period, the Government has set up a designated quarantine channel for air crew members at the HKIA on January 10. After undergoing testing and immigration procedures, air crew members will use the designated channel to arrive at the designated pick-up point to travel to their accommodation (or designated location to wait for the test result) by point-to-point transportation. The Government has started preparing for the setting up of another designated channel for other exempted persons with a view to minimising the chance of transmission of the virus from imported cases into the community.

Other boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements applicable to ordinary persons who have stayed in places outside China are still in force. To facilitate the public's understanding of the relevant requirements, the Government has categorised the relevant specified places into three groups according to the relevant risk-based boarding and compulsory quarantine

requirements. The groups of specified places and their relevant requirements are set out at Annex 2.

The spokesman said the global pandemic situation remains severe. The number of new cases had recently reached a record high of over five million cases in a week in early January, while the number of deaths had also reached a record of nearly 97,000 cases in a week in mid-January. Following a series of tightening measures for exempted persons announced in July and November last year, the Government has further tightened the exemption conditions based on risk assessment to prevent the importation of cases and plug all loopholes so as to achieve the goal of "sparing no effort in achieving 'zero infection' ". The above measures aim to restrict all exempted persons from unnecessary social contact with a view to minimising the chance of transmission of the virus from imported cases into the community, while maintaining the necessary operation of society and the economy and ensuring an uninterrupted supply of all daily necessities to the public.

The spokesman emphasised, "Based on risk-level assessment by the Centre for Health Protection, the Government has been considering all relevant factors comprehensively to review and adjust the exemption arrangement for air crew members, sea crew members and other exempted persons. The Government will continue to closely monitor the development of the global and local epidemic situation, including the extent and pattern of the spread of the disease in a certain place, and will frequently review the epidemic prevention and control requirements for persons (including exempted persons) returning to Hong Kong from different parts of the world, and adjust them as needed so as to adopt necessary mechanism in guarding against the importation of cases on the one hand, whilst ensuring as far as possible the essential operation of our city on the other."

The spokesman added, "The Government understands the impact on airlines' and shipping companies' operations, and that on air crew and sea crew members to be brought about by the new arrangements. Having said that, we would appeal to the industry's understanding of the need to tighten the relevant exemption conditions, and call for the industry to join our concerted efforts to fight the virus. We will adjust the relevant arrangements in accordance with the development of the epidemic without prejudice to safeguard public health so as to maintain Hong Kong's status as an international aviation and maritime hub."

Note: During their stay in Anchorage, Alaska, of the United States of America, air crew members can only travel between the airport and dedicated hotels by point-to-point transportation arranged by the airline. Airlines are required to arrange a specific floor/room for its crew members in the dedicated hotel and provide pre-check-in and check-out arrangements. During their stay in Anchorage, air crew members are not allowed to leave the room until they return to the airport for next cargo duty flight to Hong Kong. Air crew members shall not contact with local residents during their stay in Anchorage and airlines shall arrange designated group of air crew members to operate cargo flights between Hong Kong and Anchorage if practicable.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Ma On Shan

The Government today (February 5) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 7.35pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Ma On Shan (i.e. Heng Kong House, Heng On Estate, 1 Hang Kam Street, Ma On Shan. see Annex.) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 7am tomorrow (February 6), in order to achieve the goal of zero cases in the district with concerted efforts.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As there is a confirmed case recorded in Heng Kong House, Heng On Estate, 1 Hang Kam Street, Ma On Shan recently, and as assessed, the risk of infection in the relevant area may be higher, the Government decided to make 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 2am tomorrow. Persons subject to compulsory testing will be arranged to undergo nucleic acid testing at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons, or make arrangements for them to self-collect and submit the deep throat saliva specimens.

"We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible at night after most people are released from work. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 7am tomorrow with a view to allowing residents to start going to work at around 7am. The Government will

make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from February 2 to 5, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, according to the compulsory testing notice issued today, any person who had been present at the above buildings for more than two hours from January 23 to February 5, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing by February 7.

The Government has prepared simple food and basic cleaning supplies for the residents restricted by the declaration. The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) and a dedicated hotline (Tel: 3755 6816) for ethnic minorities. The hotline services started operation at 7.35pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government understands the residents in the district are worried and anxious because of the increase in confirmed cases in recent days. The Government hopes this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the restriction-testing declaration is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.