

# Airport ground staff preliminarily tests positive for COVID-19

Hongkong Post said today (January 5) it was notified by Hong Kong Airport Services Ltd. (HAS) that a ground staff of it working at the Airport Mail Centre (AMC) was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19, and is now receiving medical treatment at the hospital.

The staff concerned is an employee of HAS, whose duty at the AMC is to assist airlines served by HAS on handing over of air containers with Hongkong Post. It does not involve any contact with the public and his working place is not open to the public either. The staff concerned is neither a staff member of Hongkong Post nor employed by Hongkong Post. He last performed duty on January 3. His body temperature was normal during temperature screening at work and he was wearing a mask while on duty. He is a close contact of a confirmed case and underwent COVID-19 testing yesterday (January 4). On the same day, he was notified by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of his preliminary positive result at night.

After learning about the case at around noon today, Hongkong Post immediately closed AMC until tomorrow (January 6) and will arrange for thorough cleaning and disinfection of all facilities and mail items in the centre pursuant to the guidelines set out by the CHP. Hongkong Post informed all the staff members working day and night shifts at AMC about the case and is rendering its full support to the CHP for its investigation and tracing effort. Besides, Hongkong Post will arrange all staff members of AMC to undergo COVID-19 testing. While awaiting the test results, the staff concerned will rest at home.

Meanwhile, Hongkong Post has instantly activated its contingency plan by arranging for the processing of inbound and outbound mail at other mail centres so as to maintain its services.

Hongkong Post has always attached great attention to the occupational health and safety of its staff by strictly implementing various infection prevention measures during the epidemic, including conducting body temperature screening for all staff members; providing them with protective gear such as face shields, protective goggles, masks, alcohol-based handrub, gloves and alcohol swabs; and requiring them to wear masks when performing duties and stepping up the cleaning of their working environment.

Hongkong Post will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP. Staff members are also reminded to take note of their personal hygiene and stay vigilant at all times, and they are also advised to seek medical advice immediately in case of feeling unwell.

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# Testing arrangements enhanced for day patients and healthcare staff

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) Central Command Committee today (January 5) endorsed the recommendations of the Central Committee on Infectious Disease and Emergency Response to enhance the infection control measures for patients attending day care centres and receiving day services.

"Day patients are strongly recommended to have a negative result for a COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to the first scheduled appointment," the HA spokesperson said.

"For patients with regular attendance, they are recommended to repeat the COVID-19 tests on a weekly basis. Patients who will stay in hospitals for less than two hours can be exempted from the test requirement, provided that they wear surgical masks at all times during their stays in the hospitals."

Other enhanced measures to be implemented in all day care centres and day services include avoidance of meal provision. In cases where food provision cannot be avoided, snack will be provided alongside other infection control measures such as separation of patients by partitions or curtains, maintaining social distancing of at least one metre, unidirectional seating, and requiring no talking while eating or drinking.

The enhanced practices will be aligned among public hospital day services such as haemodialysis centres, day chemotherapy centres and geriatric day hospitals, etc.

Meanwhile, the HA is also working on the provision of regular tests for targeted staff providing care for vulnerable patients in the coming two weeks.

The initial target staff groups include those working in day centres providing chemotherapy for cancer patients; outreach teams visiting institutions, e.g. Community Geriatric Assessment Teams and Psycho-geriatric Outreach Teams; Palliative Care Outreach Teams; and staff of oncology wards and haemodialysis centres.

"Important lessons have been learned from the recent hospital outbreaks of COVID-19 cases due to asymptomatic patients with community-acquired infection. With a large number of COVID-19 cases in the community, these enhanced measures will be needed to protect both the patients and our front-line staff," the spokesperson added.

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## Prepackaged date sample in breach of food labelling regulation

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 5) that a prepackaged date sample was found to contain sulphur dioxide and sorbic acid, preservatives which are allowed to be used in food, but the functional class and names of them were not declared on the product's food label, in breach of the food labelling regulations. Follow-up is in progress.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: (Not available in English)  
Place of origin: China  
Distributor: Premier Food Ltd  
Net weight: 450 grams per pack  
Best-before date: December 31, 2021

"Subsequent to announcing earlier that a prepackaged date sample taken from an online shop was detected with excessive preservative and in breach of the food labelling regulation, the CFS took another date sample from the same distributor from a shop in a shopping centre in West Kowloon for testing during follow-up investigations. The test result showed that the sample contained sorbic acid at a level of 69 parts per million (ppm) and sulphur dioxide at a level of 41 ppm. Although the levels are within the legal limits, the functional class and names of the two additives were not declared on the food label of the sample," a CFS spokesman said.

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity. The distributor concerned has initiated a recall on the affected batch of the product according to the CFS's instructions. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2291 6216 during office hours for enquiries about the recall. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence," the spokesman added.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products. Sulphur dioxide is water soluble, and most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headaches and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD). Furthermore, the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) require that prepackaged food shall be legibly marked or labelled with a list of ingredients. The regulations also state that for all prepackaged

food for sale in Hong Kong containing sulphite in a concentration of 10 ppm or more, the functional class of the sulphite and its name shall be specified in the list of ingredients. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

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## **CHP investigates 32 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, January 5, the CHP was investigating 32 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 9 050 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 9 049 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, one had a travel history during the incubation period.

A total of 780 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (December 22 to January 4), including 710 local cases of which 247 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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

As a passenger flight (AI1310) operated by Air India (AI) arriving from Dehli of India to Hong Kong on December 30, 2020, had two passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 through specimens collected at the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre, while five passengers failed to comply with requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H), the DH thus invoked the regulation to prohibit landing of passenger flights from Dehli operated by AI in Hong Kong from January 6 to 19, 2021.

In view of the latest epidemic developments in the Mainland, starting tomorrow (January 6), inbound travellers who have been to Hebei Province in the past 14 days arriving via land boundary control points will be provided with specimen collection containers. They are required to collect their deep throat saliva samples by themselves in accordance with the instructions and return the samples for conducting COVID-19 testing. For the arrangement of

distributing specimen collection containers to inbound travelers who have been to Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan Province, Heilongjiang Province, Liaoning Province and Beijing 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.

Regarding the severe epidemic situation, 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](http://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](https://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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## **Latest arrangements for Rating and Valuation Department counter services**

â€œIn light of the extension of the special work arrangements for government employees, the Rating and Valuation Department announced today (January 5) that starting from this Thursday (January 7), the opening hours of its enquiry counters will be adjusted as follows to provide essential counter services to members of the public until further notice.

Opening hours of enquiry counters:

Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am to 1pm (public holidays excluded).

To reduce social contacts, the department appeals to the public to minimise visiting the enquiry counters in person unless they require services of the department urgently. Members of the public should use the department's 24-hour electronic services ([www.rvd.gov.hk](http://www.rvd.gov.hk)) to submit forms or obtain information as far as possible. They may also contact the department by email ([enquiries@rvd.gov.hk](mailto:enquiries@rvd.gov.hk)), by fax (2152 0138) or by phone at 2152 0111/2152 2152. Owing to the special work arrangements, the waiting/response time may be longer than usual.