

## **The Immigration Department accepts applications for return to Hong Kong from Hong Kong non-permanent residents outside Hong Kong under the pandemic**

An Immigration Department (ImmD) today (December 31) announced that in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hong Kong non-permanent residents who are currently outside Hong Kong with their limit of stay about to expire/expired may apply for a visa/entry permit to return to Hong Kong.

In general, persons admitted into Hong Kong under various immigration policies/schemes may apply for extension of stay within four weeks before their limit of stay expires. Applicants should be physically present in Hong Kong both at the time of applications and collection of the relevant labels.

Due to the pandemic, if persons (except foreign domestic helpers and imported workers) are outside Hong Kong, with limit of stay expiring within four weeks/expired for less than 12 months, and are not able to return to Hong Kong timely to apply for extension of stay, they may submit a duly completed application form together with the required supporting documents for application for extension of stay under the relevant immigration policy/scheme. They are also required to furnish a letter setting out the details on their inability to return to Hong Kong timely for the extension of stay formalities. If the application is approved, the applicant will be issued with a visa/entry permit for their return to Hong Kong within the validity of that visa/entry permit. For details on the arrangement, please visit the Homepage of ImmD: [www.immd.gov.hk](http://www.immd.gov.hk).

For information on the latest quarantine arrangements upon arrival in Hong Kong, please visit the relevant webpage: [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng).

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## **CHP investigates 68 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 31, the CHP was investigating 68 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 8 847 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 8 846 confirmed cases and one probable case).

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

A total of 975 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (December 17 to 30), including 899 local cases of which 334 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)).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited the 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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## [AFCD steps up enforcement in country parks and urges visitors to heed anti-epidemic laws \(with photo\)](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (December 31) reminded country park visitors to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people and strictly observe laws and regulations concerning prohibition of group gatherings in light of the latest developments of COVID-19.

A spokesman for the AFCD stressed that, "To reduce social contact, the 163 barbecue sites and 41 campsites under the management of the AFCD have

been closed since July 15. Details of these sites are available on the AFCD's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk](http://www.afcd.gov.hk)). During the closure of the facilities, no one should carry out barbecuing or camping activities in country parks, or enter a cordoned-off area. Offenders are liable to prosecution."

The spokesman also noted that, "As at December 30 this year, the AFCD took enforcement action against over 700 persons suspected to have breached the relevant laws. Patrols and enforcement action were stepped up during the Christmas holidays. Over the last week, enforcement action was taken against 38 persons suspected of breaching the relevant laws."

The spokesman appealed to members of the public to comply with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). The number of people in group gatherings should not be more than that as stipulated by the law. Offenders are liable to prosecution. They should exercise self-discipline to minimise the risk of community spread of the virus. Staff of the AFCD and other departments concerned will continue to step up patrols over the New Year holiday. Enforcement action will be taken upon any violation of relevant laws.

The spokesman also reminded country park visitors to maintain personal and environmental hygiene and social distancing. Visitors should wear a mask, properly dispose of used masks and waste, and take their litter home.



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## [Department of Justice releases "Prosecutions Hong Kong 2019"](#)

The Department of Justice (DoJ) today (December 31) published the

"Prosecutions Hong Kong 2019" online

([www.doj.gov.hk/en/publications/yrreviewpd2019.html](http://www.doj.gov.hk/en/publications/yrreviewpd2019.html)), which gives a review of the DoJ's prosecution work of last year.

The DoJ always attaches great importance to the discharge of its constitutional duty in criminal prosecutions, free from any interference. Prosecutorial decisions should be based on an objective assessment of all admissible evidence and applicable laws, made strictly in accordance with the Prosecution Code.

The Director's Overview of the "Prosecutions Hong Kong 2019" refutes allegations that the prosecution had been delinquent in prosecuting cases related to public order events. Responding to criticisms on the time taken for listing such cases for trials, it is pointed out that the prosecution, at the first hearing, would usually have to apply for an adjournment for further investigations by law enforcement agency. Similarly, most defendants, in exercising their rights, would also apply for time to consider the available evidence, seek proper legal representations and legal advice before taking plea. It is therefore common that there would be a period of time – months usually – in most of these cases before plea could be taken and a further period of time before commencement of trial.

The "Prosecutions Hong Kong 2019" also gives an account of the continued effort of the DoJ in promoting public understanding of the criminal justice system and other tasks completed in 2019.

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## **Tuen Mun Hospital announces staff member tests preliminarily positive for COVID-19**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority.

The spokesman for Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) made the following announcement today (December 31) regarding a patient care assistant (PCA) who tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A PCA of TMH attended the TMH Accident and Emergency Department (AED) yesterday (December 30). A COVID-19 test was arranged and the preliminary result was positive. She is currently hospitalised in a TMH isolation ward with stable condition.

The PCA concerned had worked in an isolation ward since late November and was equipped with appropriate personal protection equipment. She was deployed back to the Medicine and Geriatrics (M&G) ward since December 29, responsible for patient feeding and cleaning.

The hospital's infection control team is working with the Centre for Health Protection on contact tracing. Six M&G patients who were fed by the PCA concerned are classified as close contacts and are required to quarantine for 14 days. A nurse and three PCAs are classified as close contacts due to having a meal together with the PCA concerned or not wearing a face shield when cleaning a washroom.

A thorough cleaning and disinfection have been arranged and patient admission in the M&G ward concerned is now suspended. As a precautionary measure, COVID-19 tests will be arranged for staff members and around 40 in-patients of the ward concerned. TMH will continue to communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.