

New mobile specimen collection station to be set up at Ping Shek Estate and service dates of stations in various districts adjusted

With the prolonged local COVID-19 epidemic situation, the confirmed cases are distributed all over the territory. Some of the confirmed cases are asymptomatic and this indicates the existence of many silent transmission chains in the community. The Government is very concerned about a number of COVID-19 confirmed cases reported recently at Lam Shek House of Ping Shek Estate, and has arranged for a testing agency to set up a mobile specimen collection station at the following location and dates to provide free testing service for residents and workers of Ping Shek Estate.

New mobile specimen collection station	Operating hours
Ping Shek Plaza (near Yuk Shek House), Ping Shek Estate (only for residents and workers of Ping Shek Estate) (Kingmed Diagnostics (Hong Kong) Limited)	2pm to 8pm (first day on December 30) 10am to 8pm (from December 31 onwards)

The above-mentioned mobile specimen collection station at Ping Shek Estate will tentatively operate until January 3, 2021 (Sunday). The Government has also decided to extend the service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Heung Sze Wui Street in Tai Po, Sha Tsui Road in Tsuen Wan, Wong Tai Sin Square, Tung Chung North Park and Wong Chuk Hang Recreation Ground to January 8, 2021 (Friday). The Government will decide whether it is necessary to further extend the operation period of the stations after reviewing their usage and public's demand for the testing service. The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are at Annex.

On the other hand, the mobile specimen collection station set up at Lei Sang House of Lei Yue Mun Estate has ceased operation on December 29 and the station at Hung Cheuk Lau of Kwun Tong Garden Estate will cease operation after December 30. The Community Testing Centre in Yau Tong Community Hall will continue to provide free testing service to residents and workers of Lei Yue Mun Estate up to December 31 (Thursday) tentatively, and the Community Testing Centre in Lek Yuen Community Hall, Sha Tin will also provide free testing service to residents and workers of Lek Yuen Estate up to January 1, 2021 (Friday) tentatively. Their operating hours are from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm daily. The centres provide booking as well as on-site registration services. Members of the public are only required to input

simple personal information, and select the testing centre and time slot in the 24-hour appointment booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). The centres accord priority to those who make bookings in advance.

A Government spokesman said, "The testing agencies will provide specimen collection services by combined nasal and throat swabs at the mobile specimen collection stations for testing free of charge. Persons who are subject to compulsory testing and undergo testing at the mobile specimen collection stations will be deemed to have undergone a test at a Community Testing Centre. The mobile specimen collection stations will accord priority to provide testing service for local residents and workers who are subject to compulsory testing."

People whose test results are negative will be informed by SMS through their mobile phones. If any specimen tested shows a preliminarily positive result, the specimen 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.

The spokesman urged all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases) to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.

Members of public to pay attention to new requirement regarding presentation of hotel reservation confirmation for persons travelling to Shenzhen from Hong Kong via Shenzhen Bay Port

Regarding the announcement made by the Shenzhen Municipal Government today (December 29) that, with effect from January 5, 2021, persons entering Shenzhen from Hong Kong via the Shenzhen Bay Port are required to present a hotel reservation confirmation for the 14-day period of centralised quarantine and medical surveillance, in addition to a valid proof of a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result issued within 24 hours. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) urges members of the public to pay attention and ensure that they meet the relevant requirements to avoid hiccups when entering Shenzhen.

The new requirement by the Shenzhen Municipal Government is to strengthen the joint epidemic prevention and control efforts between Guangdong (GD) and Hong Kong, maintain order of the clearing process and ensure the safety and health conditions of persons using the Shenzhen Bay Port. Starting from 10am on January 5, 2021, save for persons who have been granted approval for exemption from quarantine arrangement for performing essential official and business duties and cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers who would continue to be subject to the prevailing arrangements applicable to them, all other persons who are entering Shenzhen via the Shenzhen Bay Port would be required to present a valid proof of a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result issued within 24 hours by one of the testing institutions recognised by the GD and the HKSAR Government, as well as a hotel reservation confirmation for the 14-day period of centralised quarantine and medical surveillance after their entry into Shenzhen.

A Government spokesman said, "members of the public who intend to travel from Hong Kong to Shenzhen via the Shenzhen Bay Port must make hotel reservation for the 14-day period of centralised quarantine and medical surveillance in advance through the Shenzhen Municipal Government quarantine hotel online reservation system for inbound passengers: <https://hk.sz.gov.cn> (Chinese only); The reservation system will go online on December 30 at 10 am. Before departure, they should have the hotel reservation confirmation, and the valid proof of a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result meeting the requirement of the GD Provincial Government ready, otherwise they will be refused entry into Shenzhen. If they are unable to enter Shenzhen and have to re-enter Hong Kong, they may be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C). Members of the public should pay particular attention."

The user guide of the Shenzhen's quarantine hotel online reservation system for inbound passengers will be available at <https://hk.sz.gov.cn/help.pdf> (Chinese only). The designated COVID-19 testing institutions recognised by the HKSAR Government has been posted on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" : www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories.pdf.

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the Government spokesman calls 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 if they need to go out. 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.

Engineer of Transport Department tests positive for COVID-19

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 29) learnt that an engineer has tested positive for COVID-19.

The officer concerned works on 10/F, South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon. The floor concerned is not open to the public. He last performed duties on December 22.

He has no recent travel history, and has been wearing facial masks when performing duties. He followed relevant disease prevention measures at work. This case is believed to be associated with his previously infected family member. The TD will continue to closely co-operate with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) on disease prevention measures. The workplace of the officer concerned, including the common areas, will be fully cleaned and sterilised on December 30.

During the pandemic, the TD has been strictly implementing various disease prevention measures, including measuring the body temperature of people entering the buildings, providing facial masks and other personal protective equipment for staff, and requesting staff to wear facial masks when in contact with others and at public places. Cleaning and sterilising measures for the working environment of the department have also been stepped up. Staff have been reminded to pay attention to personal hygiene and to stay vigilant. They should seek medical advice immediately if feeling unwell.

The TD will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP and co-operate with its quarantine work.

CS inspects Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, inspected Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre on Lantau Island this evening (December 29) to learn about its latest operations.

Accompanied by the Director of Architectural Services, Ms Winnie Ho; the Chief Staff Officer of the Civil Aid Service (CAS), Mr Francis Fong; and the Department of Health (DH)'s Consultant (Family Medicine) in charge, Dr Cecilia Fan, Mr Cheung was briefed by CAS members and DH staff on the daily operation of the centre and the transfer arrangement for persons under quarantine. The daily operation of quarantine centres is managed by the CAS

and the DH is responsible for the medical services at the medical post on-site.

Mr Cheung thanked in particular the CAS members and the DH staff for their dedication and effort in providing the necessary supplies and appropriate support to the persons subject to quarantine. He appealed to colleagues of relevant government departments to enhance communication and stay alert to the situation with a view to ensuring the smooth operation of the centre.

Mr Cheung noted that the Architectural Services Department immediately arranged a contractor to conduct urgent clearing of trash found in manhole after sewer blockage was reported last night. He expressed appreciation to colleagues of the department and contractors for working together in successfully increasing the number of quarantine units in Hong Kong within the shortest period of time.

Mr Cheung pointed out that quarantine and isolation of close contacts and persons with infection risks plays a vital role in the containment of the epidemic. The severe epidemic situation at present could place certain pressure on the demand for quarantine facilities. The Government will closely monitor the use of various quarantine facilities and make timely adjustments.

Constructed in four phases, the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre is now fully in use and provides a total of 3 500 units. Together with the Junior Police Call Permanent Activity Centre at Pat Heung, the Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village and the Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre, about 4 150 units in total are available in the quarantine centres across the territory. In addition, the Government has arranged for four hotels, namely Silka Tsuen Wan, Dorsett Kwun Tong, Silka Seaview in Yau Ma Tei and the Rambler Garden Hotel in Tsing Yi, to operate as designated quarantine hotels for close contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases, altogether providing more than 1 700 rooms. In total, there are currently nearly 6 000 quarantine units to cope with the demand stemming from the epidemic.

As at 11am today, the usage rate of various quarantine facilities across the territory was about 30 per cent (about 1 700 units) and over 3 200 units are ready to be used (the remaining units are under maintenance or disinfection), reflecting that the facilities are still sufficient.

The DH's Quarantine Centre Task Force has all along been proactively following up on the arrangement of transferring close contacts to quarantine centres for mandatory quarantine. The Task Force has deployed additional manpower, with the number of staff members increased from 31 to 54, and will further increase the figure to almost 70 in the future, with a view to getting in touch with the close contacts concerned within 24 hours after a quarantine order is issued and arranging for designated vehicles to transfer them to quarantine centres for quarantine.

Mr Cheung reiterated that the Government attaches great importance to the quarantine arrangements for close contacts, and the DH will continue to

work closely with related government departments to ensure the smooth transfer of close contacts to quarantine centres.

During the inspection, Mr Cheung also thanked officers of the Hong Kong Police Force and the Fire Services Department stationing on-site for standing fast at their posts in keeping the centre safe and responding to unforeseen incidents.

CHP investigates 53 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 29, the CHP was investigating 53 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 8 725 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 8 724 confirmed cases and one probable case).

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

A total of 1 048 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (December 15 to 28), including 970 local cases of which 363 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 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 the specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid test 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) 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.