

HA announces passing away of two COVID-19 patients (2)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority spokesperson today (December 28) announced the passing away of two more patients confirmed with COVID-19 infection today.

An 85-year-old female patient (case number: 8091) with chronic illness attended the Accident and Emergency Department (AED) at Yan Chai Hospital on December 18 due to persistent shortness of breath and delirium. Upon arrival at AED, her condition was critical. She was intubated to assist her breathing. She was subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 and was admitted to the isolation ward. Her condition continued to deteriorate and she eventually succumbed at 2.57pm today.

In addition, a 70-year-old male patient (case number: 5988) with chronic disease was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital on November 26 due to cough and shortness of breath. He was subsequently confirmed of COVID-19 infection. His condition continued to deteriorate and he eventually succumbed at 6.43pm today.

The hospitals were saddened about the passing away of the patients and would offer the necessary assistance to their families.

Including the above two patients, 137 COVID-19 confirmed patients have passed away in public hospitals so far.

CHP investigates 61 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 28, the CHP was investigating 61 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 8 672 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 8 671 confirmed cases and one probable case).

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

A total of 1 069 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (December 14 to 27), including 987 local cases of which 382 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 the specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop.

In view of the latest epidemic developments in the Mainland, starting tomorrow (December 29), inbound travellers who have been to Beijing 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. The arrangement for distributing specimen collection containers to inbound travellers who have been to Tianjin, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan Province, Heilongjiang Province and Liaoning Province in the past 14 days arriving via land boundary control points, which has come into effect earlier, remains unchanged.

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.

[FEHD steps up inspections and joins interdepartmental joint operations around Christmas to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-](#)

epidemic regulations

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) continued to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations during the Christmas period. The FEHD stepped up inspections in various districts and conducted joint operations with the Police in Wan Chai, Eastern District, Yau Tsim, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Sai Kung yesterday (December 27). The Government reminded catering business and scheduled premises operators to strictly comply with the requirements and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation), and customers patronising catering premises to comply with the various anti-epidemic regulations and restrictions, including the requirements on group gatherings and wearing of masks.

A total of 263 catering premises and seven other premises were inspected during the joint operations, and 650 catering premises were inspected by the FEHD on its own yesterday. The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against four catering business operators suspected for breaching the requirements under the Regulation (relating to providing dine-in services after 6pm, distance or partition between tables, mask-wearing, more than two persons seated together at one table, and proper display of the poster containing the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code). The FEHD also issued fixed penalty tickets to a total of nine persons in two catering premises for violating the relevant group gathering requirement. In addition, the FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against one person suspected for operating food businesses without a licence in contravention of the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X). Enforcement actions were also taken by the Police during the joint operations.

During the past four days (December 24 to 27), the FEHD (including in joint operations involving other departments) inspected a total of 3 029 catering premises and 32 other premises, and initiated procedures on prosecution against 24 persons suspected for breaching the requirements under the Regulation (23 catering business operators, including two providing dine-in services after 6pm; and the remaining one being scheduled premises manager). The FEHD also issued fixed penalty tickets to a total of nine persons for violating the relevant group gathering requirement. In addition, the FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against eight persons (seven persons for operating food businesses without a licence and 1 person for operating a place of public entertainment without a licence) suspected for breaching other Ordinances, including arresting two of the food business operators. Separately, a premises that has publicised holding a place of entertainment activity was found not in operation during the relevant period.

An FEHD spokesman said, "The latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to social distancing measures in catering business and scheduled premises under the Regulation has been extended till January 6, 2021. Catering business operators must strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions, which include requirements that a

person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day; and the number of people participating in a banquet in catering premises is limited to 20; no more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises, the total number of customers allowed in catering premises must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity; no live performance and dancing is allowed; a mask must be worn within the premises except when the person is consuming food or drink at a table therein; tables must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or some form of partition which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table; body temperature screening must be conducted before the person is allowed to enter the catering premises; and hand sanitisers must be provided, etc. In addition, a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must display the poster containing the 'LeaveHomeSafe' venue QR code at the entrance of the premises or at a conspicuous location. Relevant scheduled premises operators must strictly comply with the direction on closure of scheduled premises, which include places of public entertainment."

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business or scheduled premises contravenes the regulations under the Regulation, he or she is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

For customers in breach of the requirement on no more than two persons per table within catering premises, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). Moreover, for customers not wearing a mask when they are not eating or drinking at a table therein or they are not eating or drinking, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I).

The spokesman said, "Under section 31(1) of the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), except with a licence granted, no person shall carry on any food businesses like food factories or restaurants etc. Offenders are liable to be prosecuted, and upon conviction to a maximum fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months, and, for a continuing offence, a fine of \$900 for each day."

The spokesman continued, "Under section 4(1) of the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172), without a licence granted, no person shall keep or use any place of public entertainment. Offenders are liable to be prosecuted, and upon conviction to a maximum fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months, and, for a continuing offence, a fine of \$2,000 for every day."

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement and publicity efforts and will deploy additional manpower to conduct joint operations with the Police during the New Year period. Stringent enforcement actions will be taken against offenders to ensure compliance of relevant regulations. The FEHD also urged catering business and

scheduled premises operators and the public to abide by the law.

The spokesman reminded catering business and scheduled premises operators and the public to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together. He also appealed to operators concerned to comply with relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner, with a view to keeping their staff, customers and the public safe. Members of the public also have to comply with the related regulations and directions on group gatherings and mask wearing at catering premises.

[TD's response on request of reduction in bus fares following Lantau Link toll waiver](#)

Regarding the request of reduction in bus fares following Lantau Link toll waiver, a spokesman of the Transport Department today (December 28) responded as follows:

After the commissioning of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Tunnel, the Transport Department has approved Long Win Bus Company Limited, in accordance with the relevant fare scale, to reduce the fares of the six bus routes via the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Tunnel with shortened journey distance ranging from \$1.9 to \$12.7.

In addition, the government exempted franchised buses from paying toll when using government toll tunnels and Control Area starting from February 2019. Franchised bus operators are required to keep the toll saved in the dedicated fund accounts they set up, i.e. the Franchised Bus Toll Exemption Funds. When a franchised bus operator applies for a fare increase and the Chief Executive-in-Council considers that there is a justifiable need to increase the fare, the franchised bus operator will be required to offset the increase by first using the balance in the fund. Hence, the magnitude of the fare increase shouldered by the passengers will be lowered, and the passengers will be benefited directly.

The fares of franchised bus routes are determined in accordance with the relevant scales of fares approved for each bus franchise by the Chief Executive-in-Council, and the fare of each franchised bus route depends on the route group and journey distance, rather than whether the bus route passes toll tunnel or road.

Response to media enquiries about room rates of designated quarantine hotels

In response to media enquiries, a spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said today (December 28) that the room rates of the designated quarantine hotels must remain unchanged during the contract period under the terms of the contracts between the Government and the hotels. The room rates are listed in the Government's thematic website.

The spokesman said, "The Government is very concerned about the information that there had been a sudden increase in the room rates of some designated quarantine hotels. The Government has confirmed with all 36 designated quarantine hotels that they had not raised the hotel room rates announced at the time of joining the Scheme when handling the requests by returnees to Hong Kong to extend their stays to 21 days due to the extension of the quarantine period."

The spokesman added, "Under the terms of the contracts signed between the Government and the designated quarantine hotels, their room rates must remain unchanged during the contract period. The rates are listed in the Government's thematic website. The Government will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Designated Quarantine Hotel Scheme."