

## Director of Legal Aid tests positive for COVID-19

A spokesman for the Legal Aid Department (LAD) said today (September 5) that the Director of Legal Aid, Mr Chris Chong, had tested positive for COVID-19 through a rapid antigen test. He is undergoing isolation in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health.

Mr Chong last went to work on September 2. He wore masks and followed relevant disease prevention measures at work, including conducting rapid antigen tests daily. He has no recent travel history.

The LAD has conducted thorough cleaning and disinfection operations at the office concerned and will continue to implement disease prevention measures vigorously.

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## Update on cluster of Candida auris cases in Yan Chai Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Candida auris carrier cases, the spokesperson for Yan Chai Hospital gave the following update today (September 5):

Following contact tracing, two more male patients (aged 54 and 91) in a medical ward were also found to be carrying Candida auris without signs of infection. The two patients are now being treated under isolation and they are in stable condition.

The hospital will continue the contact tracing of close contacts of the patients in accordance with the prevailing guidelines. A series of enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted to prevent the spread of Candida auris:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned;
2. Enhanced admission screening for patients and environmental screening procedures; and
3. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the patients. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

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## Health risk category for Air Quality Health Index reaches "Serious" level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal air pollution levels since August 31. The Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at some monitoring stations reached the "Serious" health risk category today (September 5). The air pollution levels are expected to remain higher tomorrow (September 6).

Under the influence of a dry continental airstream, the weather in Hong Kong today is fine and very hot, with northwesterly winds bringing an airstream with higher regional background ozone and particulate pollution levels, which is also unfavourable for pollutant dispersion. The intense sunshine enhances photochemical smog activity leading to rapid formation of ozone and fine particulates in the Pearl River Delta region. The high ozone level also promotes the formation of nitrogen dioxide.

According to the Hong Kong Observatory, it will be generally fine and persistently very hot with northwesterly winds tomorrow. It is expected that the regional pollution level will remain higher than normal. With easterly winds strengthening and rainfall increasing in the middle of this week, the air quality will improve gradually.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" or "Serious" levels, children, the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public is advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time staying outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from health-care professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website ([www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html)) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB's website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows:  
[www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html).

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees, such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings at the EPD's website ([www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html](http://www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html)) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.

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## [Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (September 5) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From August 28 to September 3, four community-acquired LD cases were reported:

1. A male patient, aged 56 with underlying illnesses, who lives in On Wo Building, On Wo Yuen (Phase 1), To Kwa Wan;
2. A male patient, aged 83 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Wah Yat House, Tin Wah Estate, Tin Shui Wai;
3. A male patient, aged 61 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Tai Kok Tsui Building, Oak Street, Tai Kok Tsui; and
4. A male patient, aged 65 with good past health, who lives in Kwong Yau House, Kwong Fuk Estate, Tai Po.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of September 3, 56 LD cases had been reported this year. In 2021 and 2020, there were 69 and 104 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to

stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus that support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

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## [Update on supplies from Mainland](#)

The Task Force on Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

A spokesperson for the TLB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

The spokesperson said today (September 5) that Shenzhen operated 135 cargo vessel trips and transported around 13 910 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water for the period from September 2 to yesterday (September 4), equivalent to about 73 310 tonnes of goods, of which around 10 TEUs (about 10 tonnes) were fresh food and around 13 900 TEUs (about 73 300 tonnes) were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 904 020 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 4 354 400 tonnes of goods, of which around 2 290 TEUs (about 19 310 tonnes) were fresh food and around 901 730 TEUs (about 4 335 090 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) arranges for dedicated staff to conduct rapid nucleic acid tests, using nasopharyngeal swabs for specimen collection, for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. A total of 8 304

rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted for the period from September 2 to yesterday, among which 19 cases that tested preliminarily positive or indeterminate were found. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The TLB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, while reducing the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong.