

Hong Kong Customs conducts special operation against illicit cigarette telephone-ordering activities in public rental housing in Kowloon East (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs has mounted a special enforcement operation in the past three weeks to combat illicit cigarette telephone-ordering activities in public rental housing (PRH) estates in Kowloon East District. A total of about 150 000 suspected illicit cigarettes and about seven grams of suspected cannabis buds were seized. The estimated market value of the suspected illicit cigarettes was about \$420,000 with a duty potential of about \$290,000.

During the operation, Customs officers detected 25 relevant cases in different districts and sub-districts of Kowloon East District, including Wong Tai Sin, Tsz Wan Shan, Kai Tak, Sau Mau Ping, Ngau Tau Kok, Kwun Tong, Lam Tin and Yau Tong, resulting in the above-mentioned seizures of suspected illicit cigarettes. In those cases, Customs officers raided a suspected illicit cigarette storage centre in a PRH unit in Lam Tin and detained two vehicles suspected to be used for illicit cigarette distribution.

In the above-mentioned cases, 28 persons, including 24 men and four women who were aged between 14 and 71, were arrested. They include both illicit cigarette sellers and buyers. All the cases have been duly followed up.

Customs has all along been enhancing enforcement against illicit cigarette activities on all fronts, including cross-boundary smuggling, storage and distribution as well as peddling, through intelligence analysis. If PRH units are found to be involved in illicit cigarette activities, Customs will notify the Housing Department for follow-up action after the conclusion of court proceedings.

Customs reminds young people, especially students, to never become involved in illicit cigarette activities or distribute illicit cigarette flyers, to avoid creating a criminal record and affect their future.

Customs stresses that it is an offence to buy or sell illicit cigarettes. Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-

reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[S for Housing undergoing home quarantine](#)

The Housing Bureau today (August 30) said that a family member in the household of the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, has tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19. She is undergoing home quarantine in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health.

Ms Ho has taken COVID-19 rapid antigen tests regularly with negative test results obtained. She also tested negative after conducting a COVID-19 rapid antigen test today.

[Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 0.00am today (August 30), a total of 2 585 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are currently hospitalised for treatment, including 343 new patients. Among the patients staying in isolation facilities, 552 patients are in isolation wards, 190 patients are in second-tier isolation wards, 599 patients are in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre and 190 patients are in the Treatment Centre for COVID-19 (AsiaWorld-Expo), of which 232 in total are new patients. There are five newly reported critical patients and 12 newly reported serious patients.

There are a total of 47 patients in critical condition and 45 are in serious condition, of which 13 critical patients are receiving intensive care. Moreover, there are 304 patients who have recovered, including 263 patients who have been discharged. In addition, 13 patients who passed away in public hospitals were reported.

In the fifth wave of the epidemic, there are 62 378 patients who have recovered so far, including 62 038 patients who have been discharged. And since early 2020, there are 74 758 patients who have recovered, including 74 418 patients who have been discharged.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 2 662 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 5 949 cases by RATs verified as well as 237 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 30) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, August 30, the CHP was investigating 8 611 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 2 662 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (1 225 confirmed cases, 1 134 asymptomatic cases and 303 cases with pending status) and 5 949 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) verified in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 237 additional imported cases were reported, including 205 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (18 confirmed cases, 125 asymptomatic cases and 62 cases with pending status) and 32 cases that tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 884 194 and 647 114 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations of the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

Among the specimens received by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch during August 21 to 27 for verification testing of local cases, about 7.3 per cent and 49.1 per cent of them (seven-day moving average) are related to the sub-lineages BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 (including suspected cases) of the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, August 30, a total of 9 468 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 387 and 78 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as three deaths reported from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Centre. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 9 681 death cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (August 29), the total number of confirmed cases was 383 049, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 259 748, 31 and 238 499 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the local situation of COVID-19 infection is severe with the number of cases tested positive growing at an increased pace. The CHP strongly appeals to the community to strictly comply with social distancing measures and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or mass gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The spokesman reminded the public that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients, children, and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.

[HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property](#)

management staff in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, North and Eastern Districts

In light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, North and Eastern Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (August 30) that the Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO), the Kwai Tsing District Office (K&TDO), the North District Office (NDO) and the Eastern District Office (EDO) have distributed a total of about 400 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The TWDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Bellagio, Rhine Garden, Ocean Pointe, Rhine Terrace, Parc City, Clague Garden Estate, Skyline Plaza, Ocean Supreme, Ocean Pride and Tsuen Wan Plaza for voluntary testing through the property management companies. The TWDO also distributed rapid test kits to households living in Sham Tseng Village, Sham Tseng Light Housing, Sham Tseng Kau Tsuen, Sham Tseng San Tsuen, Tsing Fai Tong New Village in Sham Tseng and Shu On Terrace for voluntary testing through the Village Head and a non-governmental organisation.

The K&TDO also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in residential premises around Lai Fong Street, Yan Fong Street, Shun Fong Street and Shing Fong Street for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the owners' corporations.

The NDO also commenced distributing rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Yan Shing Court, Wa Mei Shan Village, Yung Shing Court, Wo Hop Shek Village, Wo Hing Tsuen, Regalia Villa, Wah Ming Estate and Flora Plaza for voluntary testing through the property management companies, the Village Representatives and the resident representatives.

In addition, the EDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Les Saisons, Grand Promenade, Lei King Wan, Hang Tsui Court and Tsui Wan Estate for voluntary testing through the property management companies.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUZTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for

Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.