

Government extends existing social distancing measures

The Government announced today (August 9) the gazettal of the extension of existing social distancing measures in accordance with the public health emergency regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance. The measures will be effective from August 11 to August 24.

The number of daily new cases in Hong Kong remains high at four-digit figures, with the overall number of hospitalised patients consistently exceeding 1 000 without signs of a steady downward trend. In particular, cases related to Omicron mutant strain sub-lineages BA.4/BA.5 have also increased. In order to contain the risk of virus transmission and balance the needs for allowing social and economic activities, the Government has decided to maintain the existing social distancing measures for the next 14-day cycle without making any relaxation. Relevant measures include allowing all catering premises and scheduled premises to continue to operate subject to strict compliance with the requirements including use of the Vaccine Pass and "LeaveHomeSafe". Other requirements, such as mask-wearing for citizens on transport carriers and in specified public places, as well as prohibition of group gatherings in public places, also remain in force.

The Government in particular reminds persons-in-charge of premises of the introduction of the Red Code and Amber Code under the Vaccine Pass to differentiate persons with a higher risk of infection of COVID-19 starting from today. Confirmed cases will be categorised as persons with a Red Code, and inbound persons from overseas places or Taiwan will be categorised as persons with an Amber Code. Their Vaccine Pass QR codes will be displayed in red or amber accordingly. Persons-in-charge of premises should deny entry of relevant persons to relevant premises in accordance with relevant rules, and make practicable and feasible arrangements to ensure that staff who are categorised as persons with a Red Code will not enter the premises. If any person holding an Amber Code works in the premises, the persons-in-charge of the premises must ensure that such staff will strictly observe the anti-epidemic measures including mask-wearing. In addition, persons-in-charge or managers of the premises that are required to use the QR Code Verification Scanner should update their scanner to version 4.4.0 or above as soon as possible before August 12, and ensure that the relevant mobile devices maintain an Internet connection during the operating hours of the premises no later than August 23 (see [press release](#) for details).

Specific measures (see details of the restrictions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) in Annex 1) to be in force during the period from August 11 to August 24 include:

(I) Catering business

(1) From 0.00am to 4.59am every day, save for specific premises (see Annex 2), a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must continue to cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business, and close any premises or part of the premises (whichever is applicable) on which food or drink is sold or supplied by the business for consumption on the premises. The premises concerned may still sell or supply food and/or drink for takeaway services and deliveries. A person responsible for carrying on a catering business is also required to put up a notice at the entrance to the catering premises to remind patrons that food or drink should not be consumed in areas adjacent to the catering premises. All patrons who enter the bar/pub zone inside a catering premises must continue to present proof of a negative rapid antigen test (RAT) result obtained within 24 hours before entering the relevant zone. Otherwise, they should be denied entry to the relevant zone. The maximum number of persons per table for catering premises will be eight, and banquets with no more than 120 persons will be allowed. Live performance and dancing activity will remain prohibited therein.

(2) Bars/pubs may open every day from 5am to 1.59am of the subsequent day with a maximum number of four persons per table and the total number of patrons capped at 75 per cent of their capacity. Live performance and dancing activity will remain prohibited therein. All patrons of bars/pubs must continue to present proof of a negative RAT result obtained within 24 hours before entering the relevant premises. Otherwise, they should be denied entry.

(3) Other requirements and restrictions on catering premises and bars/pubs will continue to remain in force, including that all patrons, when they are away from the table, must not consume food or drink and must wear a mask, and they must scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code using the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application on their mobile phones/other mobile devices before entering the premises (excluding persons who only order takeaway). Operators of catering premises and bars/pubs are required to use the latest "QR Code Verification Scanner" mobile application provided by the Government to scan the QR code of a patron's vaccination record, medical exemption certificate or recovery record.

(II) Scheduled premises

(4) For swimming pools, sports premises, fitness centres, beauty parlours and massage establishments, places of public entertainment, places of amusement, amusement game centres, event premises, religious premises, barber shops/hair salons, bathhouses, party rooms, clubs/nightclubs, karaoke establishments, mahjong-tin kau premises and cruise ships, managers must comply with the relevant restrictions under Cap. 599F. In particular, live performance and dancing activity remain prohibited in clubs/nightclubs, and their patrons should continue to be denied entry unless they can present proof of a negative RAT result obtained within 24 hours before entering the relevant premises. Staff members and patrons alike must wear a mask at all times save for exempted circumstances. Citizens are allowed not to wear masks when they are exercising in sports premises as well as fitness centres which meet the

requirement on air change.

(5) For club-houses and hotels or guesthouses, managers must continue to comply with the relevant restrictions under Cap. 599F, and the catering premises, bars/pubs and scheduled premises therein must comply with all applicable requirements.

(6) For shopping malls, department stores, supermarkets and markets, the manager/person-in-charge must continue to comply with the relevant restrictions under Cap. 599F, including fulfilling the relevant requirements on use of "LeaveHomeSafe" and the Vaccine Pass under "passive checking".

(7) The restriction on the number of persons allowed in premises such as cinemas, performance venues, museums, event premises and religious premises, etc, will remain at 85 per cent of their capacity. Patrons may eat and drink in cinema houses.

(III) Mask-wearing requirement

(8) The mandatory mask-wearing requirement under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) will be extended. A person must wear a mask all the time when the person is boarding or on board a public transport carrier, is entering or present in an MTR paid area, or is entering or present in a specified public place. Citizens are allowed not to wear masks if they are present in outdoor public places in country parks and special areas as defined in section 2 of the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208), or are conducting strenuous physical activity (e.g. exercising or jogging) in outdoor public places.

(9) Under Cap. 599I, if a person does not wear a mask in accordance with the requirement, an authorised person may deny that person from boarding a public transport carrier or entering the area concerned, as well as require that person to wear a mask and disembark from the carrier or leave the said area. A person in contravention of the relevant provision commits an offence and the maximum penalty is a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). In addition, authorised public officers may issue penalty notices to persons who do not wear a mask in accordance with the requirement and such persons may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty at \$5,000.

(IV) Group gatherings

(10) Unless exempted, group gatherings of more than four persons in public places will remain prohibited. The requirement is also applicable to group gatherings in catering premises, bars/pubs and scheduled premises regulated under Cap. 599F in which the relevant requirements or restrictions are not complied with.

(11) Subject to relevant requirements, local group tours with no more than 30 persons may continue to be conducted. The relevant requirements include (i) relevant staff have received three doses of vaccine, and conducted an RAT on the same day before the commencement of local group tour activities, and (ii)

all tour participants have fulfilled the prevailing Vaccine Pass requirements. If all tour participants have conducted an RAT on the same day of the tour before the commencement of local group tour activities, the relevant restriction on the number of participants will be relaxed to 100 persons.

(12) Any person who participates in a prohibited group gathering; organises a prohibited group gathering; owns, controls or operates the place of such a gathering; and knowingly allows the taking place of such a gathering commits an offence under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who participate in a prohibited group gathering may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty at \$5,000.

A Government spokesman said, "As the epidemic situation in Hong Kong has not yet stabilised, citizens should continue to stay on guard and strictly observe social distancing measures. COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective for preventing severe cases or deaths, and the minimum age for receiving vaccine has been lowered to 6 months old. We urge citizens to arrange for the elderly and children to get vaccinated as early as possible, thereby protecting public health together."

[Government gazettes compulsory testing notice](#)

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 43 specified places during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a number of cases testing positive, 40 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. Furthermore, since some sewage samples collected in Tsuen Wan and Tin Shui Wai have tested positive, three specified premises are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. Mobile specimen collection stations have been set up by the Government in different districts to facilitate testing to be conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

Persons who have tested positive in the past three months (including

positive cases tested either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RATs) that have been self-declared to the DH) do not need to undergo compulsory testing. For those who are subject to compulsory testing (save for those who have declared their positive RAT results as mentioned above), they must undergo nucleic acid tests in accordance with relevant compulsory testing notices and cannot use RATs to fulfil the requirement of such notices. In other words, a negative RAT result cannot be deemed as fulfilling the compulsory testing requirement. Furthermore, unless a person subject to compulsory testing has obtained a medical certificate proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, the person cannot provide a deep throat saliva sample to fulfil the compulsory testing requirement.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link: www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220809.pdf.

If any persons test positive under compulsory testing, such positive cases will be handled in the same manner as in those identified through other nucleic acid tests or self-declared through RATs. Their isolation arrangements (as well as the quarantine arrangements of their household members) are no different from other positive cases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo the test using a stool specimen. For details on obtaining stool specimen bottles, please refer to the COVID-19 thematic website: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool_bottle_collection_points.pdf.

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated without delay. The Government is working towards the goal of boosting the vaccination rates of children, teenagers and the elderly so that they can be protected by the vaccines as early as possible. Furthermore, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the CHP of the DH has earlier updated the consensus interim recommendations that a three-dose series of Comirnaty vaccine (each dose is one-tenth of that for an adult) may be administered to children aged six months to under five years; and a three-dose series of CoronaVac vaccine (each dose of the same dosage as that for an

adult) for children aged six months to less than three years. Besides, persons aged 50 and above may receive the fourth dose of COVID-19 vaccine after at least three months from the third dose. Members of the public who are eligible should get the fourth dose as early as possible for better protection.

CTCs provide testing services for the public. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm today (August 9), there was around 94 per cent availability for booking places for the coming two weeks. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government will set up a mobile specimen collection station at Discovery Bay Community Hall tomorrow (August 10). In view that some mobile specimen collection stations were closed when the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 was in force today, the mobile specimen collection stations at Wah Fu (II) Estate in Pok Fu Lam, Ap Lei Chau Estate and Tin Wang Court in Wong Tai Sin will continue service tomorrow while the service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Bellagio in Sham Tseng and Lei Muk Shue Estate in Tsuen Wan will be extended to August 11 (Thursday). Separately, ticketing machines have been installed in a number of service points for on-site ticket arrangement. Members of the public who have obtained a ticket can visit the CTC website (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to check the real-time queueing ticket status. Booking service is also provided for some large-scale mobile specimen collection stations, and members of the public may use the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to reserve a suitable time slot for testing.

Other than persons subject to compulsory testing, all members of the public may conduct free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The Government will also continue to provide free nucleic acid testing service for eligible persons of targeted groups, visitors to public hospitals and residential care homes and all elderly people aged 60 or above at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations. The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all CTCs will be closed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force. Any changes in the arrangements of testing service will be announced on site, and members of the public may also pay attention to the relevant press releases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(a) For tests which require using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable)

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;

2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or

4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

(b) For persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, vending machines set up at MTR stations or designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times,

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);

2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A Government spokesman cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. The fixed penalty for discharging the liability is \$10,000. The person may also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Any person in breach of the compulsory testing order would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

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[Four young talents awarded Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund scholarships \(with photo\)](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund:

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund held a ceremony today (August 9) to award scholarships to four young talents in music and dance.

Scholarships were awarded to four recipients this year, namely, Mr Wayson Poon, Miss Laurentia Woo, Miss Judy Yiu and Miss Helen Yu. Three of the awardees or their representatives attended the award ceremony and shared their thoughts. They thanked the Fund for its support and committed themselves to making the best use of their opportunity to pursue further studies in Hong Kong or abroad.

This year's scholarships, totalling \$2.35 million, will support the awardees to pursue further education in the field of music or dance in Hong Kong or overseas, enabling them to contribute to the development of arts in Hong Kong upon the completion of their studies. This year, the Fund also supports awardees to study music or dance education in Hong Kong with an aim to nurture educators in the music or dance field.

Attending the ceremony were the Board Chairman of the Fund, Mr Douglas So; Deputy Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Mrs Vicki Kwok; Senior Charities Manager of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Ms Meiyee Wong; Board members of the Fund, Dr Lesley Chan, Miss Lisa Marie Djeng and Ms Iona Sham; past Board members of the Fund, Mr Philip Kan, Dr Qin Rong and Ms Selina Tsang; the Chairperson of the Music Audition Panel, Mr Warren Lee; the Chairperson of the Dance Audition Panel, Ms Tania Tang; member of the Dance Audition Panel Professor Anna Chan; Pre-screening Panel members Ms

Amelia Chan, Professor Carmen Koon, Dr Michael Leung and Mr Andrew Ling; and the Executive Committee Chairperson of the Fund's Awardees Association, Ms Carol Yu; Vice-Chairperson (Dance) Mr Allen Lam and members (Dance) Mr Li Long-hin and Mr Ronny Wong.

The Fund was set up in 1980 with a \$10 million donation from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for the promotion and development of music and dance education and training in Hong Kong. In 1994, a further capital injection of \$22 million was provided by the Trust to meet an increasing demand for financial support. In 2014, the Trust approved an additional funding of more than \$16 million to implement a six-year pilot project which included the launching of a local scholarship scheme for post-graduate studies in addition to the established non-local studies music and dance scholarship scheme, and the setting up of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund Awardees Association. Upon the completion of the pilot project in 2020, the Trust provided a three-year funding of \$5.68 million to enable the Fund to sustain the local scholarship scheme and support the operation of the Awardees Association. To date (including this year), the Fund has awarded 367 scholarships amounting to about \$80.95 million.



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