

Government trials upgraded electronic health declaration system to enhance arrival quarantine procedures

The Government announced today (July 24) the implementation of an upgraded electronic health declaration system on a trial basis starting from 0.00am on July 28 (Hong Kong Time), requiring inbound persons to complete the online electronic health declaration of the Department of Health (DH) and obtain a QR code before boarding their flights to Hong Kong. The launch of the upgraded electronic health declaration system will facilitate the Government's progressive enhancements to the electronic checking and processing of arrival quarantine procedures, thereby streamlining the process and reducing the time required for inbound persons to stay at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA).

Prevailing arrival quarantine arrangement

In accordance with the prevailing arrival quarantine requirements, all inbound persons must complete health declarations and undergo the "test-and-hold" procedures at the HKIA. The Government has launched the electronic health declaration procedure since June 2020, allowing inbound persons to submit health declaration through the [Health & Quarantine Information Declaration](#) of the DH (www.chp.gov.hk/hdf/) in order to obtain a QR code for boarding a flight to Hong Kong. Since the launch of the relevant procedure, most inbound persons have completed the electronic health declaration procedure before boarding. The number of inbound persons taking time to complete the health declaration form upon arrival in Hong Kong has reduced significantly. However, there remains some persons who do not complete their health declaration until after their arrival in Hong Kong, and that may hinder other inbound persons who already hold a valid health declaration during peak hours.

Trial run of upgraded electronic health declaration system

To prepare for the enhancements to the flow of arrival quarantine procedures, the Government will implement the upgraded health declaration system on a trial basis and require all inbound persons to complete the electronic health declaration and obtain a QR code before boarding their flight. Starting from 0.00am on July 28 (Hong Kong Time), all persons boarding flights to Hong Kong are required to complete the Health & Quarantine Information Declaration of the DH in advance and present the health declaration QR code generated after completion of the declaration (which can be a downloadable version of the QR code, a screen shot or a printout) at check-in for verification by the airline. The health declaration QR code will be valid for 96 hours, i.e. inbound persons can submit the declaration form as early as three days before their scheduled arrival time in Hong Kong (for instance, a person arriving in Hong Kong on Thursday may submit declaration form starting from Monday).

With the upgraded electronic health declaration system, inbound persons will be required to provide through the online system, on top of the health and quarantine declaration, information required for inbound quarantine such as proof of completion of vaccination and reservation reference numbers of designated quarantine hotels (DQHs). During the trial run, inbound persons still need to present the relevant documents when boarding the flight as per existing requirement. Those who cannot produce the electronic health declaration QR code will still be allowed to board the flight during the trial period. Upon completion of the trial and enhancement of the systems, inbound persons must obtain the electronic health declaration QR code before they can board a flight to Hong Kong.

The Government is planning to upgrade the electronic health declaration system and the functions of the QR code in August upon successful trial of the upgraded electronic health declaration system, so that the pre-boarding documentation verification process can be gradually digitalised and conducted via the system, including the verification of proof of vaccination and DQH reservations. The verified information will then be integrated into the electronic health declaration QR code to enable inbound persons to use it for going through the procedures prior to boarding and upon arrival at the HKIA, such as inbound quarantine, "test-and-hold", and closed-loop transportation to DQHs.

A Government spokesman said, "Completing the health declaration prior to boarding allows smoother arrival quarantine procedures for inbound persons at the HKIA. It will also facilitate the gradual introduction of electronic processing of arrival quarantine procedures, thereby reducing the need for manual processing and hence the waiting time and bottlenecks.

"Requiring inbound persons to make electronic health declaration, submit information online and obtain a QR code before boarding is also a step in the Government's ongoing efforts to streamline and enhance the flow of arrival quarantine procedures at the airport. Following the implementation of the upgraded functions of the electronic health declaration system, inbound persons who have verified the required information through the declaration system will be allowed to make use of the 'express channel' at the airport to go through the arrival quarantine procedures and be arranged for point-to-point transportation to DQHs by using the health declaration QR code, thus significantly cutting down the time they need to spend at the airport."

The Government will gazette the relevant updated specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to specify the presentation of health declaration code as a boarding condition. Detailed boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements can be found at the [COVID-19 thematic website](#).

The Government will balance the risks and needs, and adopt precise measures based on scientific evidences and data, with a view to achieving the greatest effect with the lowest cost, thereby minimising the impact on the normal activities of the society. The Government will also continue to enhance the quarantine and testing measures for inbound persons, so as to

implement the stringent measures to guard against importation of cases in a more precise manner while enhancing the quarantine arrangement for persons arriving in Hong Kong from overseas places, thereby facilitating the movement of people necessary for social and economic recovery.

Government announces latest situation of fresh food supply from Mainland

A Government spokesman announced today (July 24) that the supply of fresh food from the Mainland yesterday (July 23) was sufficient and stable.

According to the latest information, the quantity of vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong yesterday (as of midnight) by land and water transportation was over 2 500 tonnes, comparable to the average daily supply from the Mainland on a normal day. The volume of vegetables sold through the wholesale markets of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Vegetable Marketing Organization was about 840 tonnes. The average wholesale prices of choi sum and pak choi stood at \$7.30 and \$6.50 per catty respectively yesterday, comparable to their average daily wholesale prices last year. The supply of eggs to the wholesale market remained steady, with the average daily supply standing at about 3.2 million for the past week, comparable to the average daily supply on a normal day last year.

The total supply of chilled meat from the Mainland yesterday was about 40 tonnes. The supply of live pigs was plentiful.

The supply of chilled poultry from the Mainland was over 140 000 head yesterday, and over 11 000 live chickens were slaughtered locally. The supply was abundant.

Regarding the rice supply, in compliance with the requirement by the Government, stockholders of rice have to maintain the reserve stock of rice at a level sufficient for consumption by the local population for 15 days. The trade generally stocks double the required amount, which is sufficient for one month's consumption by Hong Kong citizens. In recent years, the import and consumption of rice in Hong Kong has stood at a steady level of around 320 000 to 330 000 tonnes per year. The import quantity (including reserve stock) as of end-June 2022 was 30 400 tonnes. Suppliers also maintain a reserve for food that can be stored, such as frozen meat, for around three months' stock generally.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the Mainland authorities and major food suppliers to ensure a stable food supply.

The AFCD updates and publishes the fresh food supply information daily. Members of the public may visit the AFCD website for updates on daily

supplies and wholesale prices of fresh food
(www.afcd.gov.hk/english/agriculture/agr_fresh/agr_fresh.html).

HyD's response to media enquiries on hanging of national flags at lamp posts under its purview

In response to media enquiries on the hanging of national flags at the lamp posts under its purview, a spokesman for the Highways Department (HyD) gave the following response today (July 21):

The Government has all along encouraged community organisations and members of the public to celebrate the National Day and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Establishment Day together, and expressed their patriotic feelings that are premised on the respect for the national flag, regional flag and their designs. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, the Government has hanged celebratory buntings at the lamp posts in more than 200 main roads in different districts.

Persons or groups who wish to hang flags at the lamp posts under the purview of the HyD (for example, for promotion of activities by private organisations) can file written applications to the HyD and provide related information for the HyD to consider and consult the views of relevant departments having regard to their actual circumstances. In accordance with the Government's current fee-charging principle on cost recovery, the department needs to recover the expenses involving the inspection work carried out by public lighting maintenance contractors during the hanging of flags from the applicants.

In August 2021, the HyD received an application for the first time from a local group for hanging national flags at the lamp posts under the purview of the department to celebrate the National Day. The HyD handled the application according to the established procedures. The application was then approved and the group paid the related administrative fees and inspection fees according to the procedures.

The HyD later received a request for granting discretionary exemption to the above fees. As there is no fee waiver mechanism in the existing vetting and approval procedure, the department has all along followed up the detailed arrangements for the application for fee waiver with relevant departments proactively. The procedure for vetting and approving for the waiver has now been completed. The department will inform the group of the refund arrangement as soon as possible. Also, the department is now collaborating with relevant departments to formulate the detailed arrangements on waiver of

related fees in hanging national flags at lamp posts in the future.

Registration and application for amendment of registration records for 2022 (Phase II) Consumption Voucher Scheme to close on July 23

The registration for the 2022 (Phase II) Consumption Voucher Scheme (Scheme) will close on Saturday (July 23). The Government spokesman today (July 21) reminded eligible persons who have not registered before, and existing registrants who want to change their stored value facility (SVF) account for receiving consumption vouchers under Phase II to grasp the time to complete the procedure through the electronic registration portal in the Scheme website (www.consumptionvoucher.gov.hk) or one of the temporary service centres (Note).

For existing registrants who do not want to change the SVF account, the Government will later conduct checking on their eligibility according to the eligibility criteria announced on June 13. All registrants will receive notification on the checking result by SMS issued through the specified telephone number (+852 6059 1120). People may also enquire about their checking result through the interactive voice response system of the hotline 18 5000. Eligible registrants will be disbursed with electronic consumption vouchers by instalments starting from August 7.

The spokesman said that registrants who wish to submit representations after being notified that they are not eligible may download the "[Application Form for Review](#)" from the Scheme website or obtain it through the Scheme hotline 18 5000. They should return the completed application form together with relevant documents through the following channels within 14 days after receipt of the SMS notification:

- (1) by post to the "Consumption Voucher Scheme Secretariat" at P.O. Box 185000, General Post Office, Hong Kong;
- (2) by fax (number 3106 0701);
- (3) by email (enquiry@consumptionvoucher.gov.hk); or
- (4) by hand to the eight temporary service centres located in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories or the "Consumption Voucher Scheme Secretariat" on 17/F, Pioneer Centre, 750 Nathan Road, Mong Kok, Kowloon. The temporary service centres will be opened from 9am to 6pm from Monday to Saturday (except public holidays) until August 13.

The Secretariat will issue SMS to confirm receipt of the review application. Under normal circumstances, the Secretariat will notify the

applicant in writing of the review result within six weeks.

People may visit the [Scheme website](#) or call the hotline 18 5000 for details about the Scheme.

Note:

The addresses of the eight temporary service centres are as follows:

Hong Kong Island

1. 20/F, West Exchange Tower, 322 Des Voeux Road Central, Sheung Wan (MTR Sheung Wan Exit A1)
2. Unit 1202, 12/F, Olympia Plaza, 255 King's Road, North Point (MTR Fortress Hill Exit B)

Kowloon

3. Units 601 – 602, 6/F, 9 Wing Hong Street, Cheung Sha Wan (MTR Lai Chi Kok Exit C)
4. Units 1834 – 1838, 18/F, Pioneer Centre, 750 Nathan Road, Mong Kok (MTR Prince Edward Exit B2)
5. Unit 1004, 10/F, Kwun Tong View, 410 Kwun Tong Road, Kwun Tong (MTR Kwun Tong Exit A2)

New Territories

6. Unit 2310, 23/F, Metropole Square, 2 On Yiu Street, Shek Mun, Sha Tin (MTR Shek Mun Exit C)
7. Units 3301 – 3303, 33/F, The Octagon, 6 Sha Tsui Road, Tsuen Wan (Near MTR Tsuen Wan West Station)
8. Tseng Choi Street Community Hall, 27 Tseng Choi Street, Tuen Mun San Hui, Tuen Mun (Next to Light Rail Transit San Hui Stop)

[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 62 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, 56 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. Furthermore, since some sewage samples collected in Wong Tai Sin and Fanling have tested positive, six 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_20220721.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, and persons aged 60 or above who have taken three doses of vaccine are recommended to receive an additional dose (i.e. fourth dose) of either Comirnaty vaccine or CoronaVac vaccine at least three months after their last 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 (July 21), there was around 96 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 reopen the mobile specimen collection stations at Wah Kwai Estate in Pok Fu Lam and Cheung Wang Estate in Tsing Yi tomorrow (July 22). 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 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."