

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 313 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 2 000 cases by RATs verified as well as 173 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 17) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, July 17, the CHP was investigating 3 313 additional locally acquired cases tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including 1 313 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests (591 confirmed cases, 576 asymptomatic cases and 146 cases with pending case status) and 2 000 cases tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) verified in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 173 additional imported cases were reported, including 161 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests (nine confirmed cases, 110 asymptomatic cases and 42 cases with pending case status) and 12 cases tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 796 285 and 498 051 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 on the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

Meanwhile, according to the analysis by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, as of yesterday (July 16), Hong Kong had recorded a total of 19 cases, 1 198 cases and 988 cases carrying the sub-lineages BA.2.12, BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 under the Omicron mutant strain respectively (including suspected cases), among which zero, 971 and 312 of them are local cases.

In addition, as of 0.00am, July 17, a total of 9 224 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 146 and 75 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 9 437 death cases that have 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, the total number of confirmed cases was 345 395, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and

pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 216 619, 24 and 232 773 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that as the local situation of COVID-19 infection is still severe, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with social distancing measures, avoid going out and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The spokesman reminded 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 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.

Hospital Authority announces positive patient cases detected via admission screening or testing and clusters of nosocomial COVID-19 infections

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority today (July 17) announced information regarding patients who tested positive via admission screening or testing with patients or staff members identified as close contacts and nosocomial COVID-19 infection cases.

The following are the statistics of patients who tested positive via admission screening or by testing in public hospitals with patients or staff members identified as close contacts:

Hospital/clinic	Number of patients who tested positive	Number of patients identified as close contacts	Number of staff members without appropriate personal protective equipment identified as close contacts
Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital	1	2	–
Tuen Mun Hospital	1	1	–

In addition, a 70-year-old patient in a male medical ward of North District Hospital tested positive for COVID-19 via testing arrangement on July 15. The hospital conducted contact tracing. Four more patients and three staff members also tested positive for COVID-19. The hospital is investigating the linkage of the cases concerned. The five patients are currently under isolation treatment. One of the patients is in critical condition due to his underlying disease, while the others are in stable condition. Three staff members are also in stable condition.

One more female patient of a palliative care ward of Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital tested positive for COVID-19. So far, there are altogether 10 patients and five staff members tested positive. The patient concerned is being treated under insolation in stable condition.

Two more student nurses and one patient care assistant of an orthopaedics and traumatology ward of Queen Elizabeth Hospital tested positive for COVID-19. So far, there are altogether six patients and three staff members tested positive.

Admission and visiting arrangements for the aforementioned wards have been suspended. Thorough cleansing and disinfection have been conducted. The hospitals will continue to monitor the health condition of patients and staff members closely, and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified

“restricted area” in Him Yat House, Yat Tung (II) Estate, Tung Chung

The Government today (July 17) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 6pm under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tung Chung (i.e. Him Yat House, Yat Tung (II) Estate, Tung Chung. See Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around 10am tomorrow (July 18). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 10am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from July 11 to July 17, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before July 19, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Housing Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 3152 3952) which started operation at 6pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

[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 (July 17) that Shenzhen operated 51 cargo

vessel trips and transported around 5 910 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water yesterday (July 16), equivalent to about 41 200 tonnes of goods, of which around 20 TEUs (about 200 tonnes) were fresh food and around 5 890 TEUs (about 41 000 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 679 190 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 3 322 860 tonnes of goods, of which around 2 120 TEUs (about 18 110 tonnes) were fresh food and around 677 070 TEUs (about 3 304 750 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 2 802 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday, among which two cases that tested 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.

[HAD to open temporary night heat shelters](#)

The Home Affairs Department will open 18 temporary night heat shelters tonight (July 17) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

In light of the implementation of mandatory use of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application when entering government premises, all persons are required to use the app to scan the venue QR code before they are allowed to enter temporary night heat shelters, except for exempted persons (including persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, persons with disabilities that render use of the app difficult and persons without smartphones). All exempted persons are required to complete a prescribed form to register their personal particulars, contact phone number and the date and time of entry. The staff will verify the information provided.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –
Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –
Wah Kwai Community Centre
Wah Kwai Estate, Kellett Bay

Wan Chai –
Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –
Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –
Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –

Tung Chung Community Hall

G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building, 39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –

Kwai Shing Community Hall

Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –

Cheung Wah Community Hall

Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –

Chi Shin Activity Centre

G/F, Tseung Kwan O South Ancillary Facilities Block, 5 Chi Shin Street,
Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –

Lung Hang Estate Community Centre

Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –

Tai Po Community Centre

2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –

Lei Muk Shue Community Hall

G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –

Wu Shan Road Community Hall

101 Wu Shan Road, Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –

Long Ping Community Hall

Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community.

People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas of the designated community centres and community halls. For the addresses of these designated community centres and community halls, please browse the following

document: www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.