

# Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about the fatal work accident that happened at a construction site at the West Kowloon Cultural District this afternoon (January 24), in which a male worker, while repairing a crawler-mounted crane, was trapped between the sheave of the lowered jib of the crane and a bored pile casing in the vicinity. He was certified dead later in hospital. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expressed its deepest sympathy to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending repairing work of crawler-mounted cranes on the site. The contractor cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, safe plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their

employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

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## **CHP follows up on cases tested positive and cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus of Block 1, Tropicana Gardens, Wong Tai Sin and Fu Keung House, Tai Wo Hau Estate**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 24) said as two cases tested positive and a case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus recently occurred at Block 1, Tropicana Gardens, Wong Tai Sin which involved units E at three different floors as well as a case tested positive and a case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus recently occurred at Fu Keung House, Tai Wo Hau Estate which involved units 23 at two different floors, the CHP is proactively following up to investigate whether the infection of the cases in the two buildings are related to environmental factors, so as to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus.

Since some sewage samples collected in the specified area in Wong Tai Sin have tested positive, all relevant buildings within the specified area are covered by a compulsory testing notice on January 21. Cases 13382 and 13400 were tested positive and initial testing results show that the cases carry the Delta variant. The two patients live in units E on different floors at Block 1, Tropicana Gardens, Wong Tai Sin. The CHP today has found another case tested preliminarily positive involving a 26-year-old male resident in unit E on another floor. He developed symptoms on January 15 and attended a private doctor on January 18 and 22. He underwent compulsory testing yesterday in accordance with relevant requirement and his sample tested preliminarily positive with a Ct value of 34. The patient keeps a hamster at home. His colleague is case 13381 announced today and initial testing results show that the case carries the Delta variant as well.

The CHP has co-ordinated with related government departments and experts and conducted an inspection today of the floors and units concerned at Block 1, Tropicana Gardens, Wong Tai Sin to investigate and examine if environmental factors were involved in the infection of the cases. The CHP took into account the opinions from experts, who preliminarily considered

that upward transmission of virus via pipes is involved. The CHP will issue quarantine orders to asymptomatic residents of unit E on all floors of Block 1, Tropicana Gardens, Wong Tai Sin who resided there during the incubation period of the relevant cases and transfer them to a quarantine facility; symptomatic residents will be sent to the hospital for treatment.

Furthermore, the experts have also conducted an inspection at Fu Keung House, Tai Wo Hau Estate. In view of case 13146 tested positive earlier resided in unit 423 of Fu Keung House, Tai Wo Hau Estate, the Government made a "restriction-testing declaration" for the building on January 23 and no case that tested positive was found. The CHP today has found another case tested preliminarily positive involving an 11-year-old girl residing at unit 323. She developed symptoms on January 23 and attended a hospital on the same day and her sample tested preliminarily positive. Experts preliminarily opined that downward transmission of virus via pipes is involved. As the pipes of the units concerned are connected to those of adjacent units, the CHP will issue quarantine orders to residents of units 321 and 421 at Fu Keung House.

The CHP reminded members of the public to ensure household environmental hygiene by maintaining drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN\\_Specified\\_premises\\_and\\_Dates\\_of\\_Testing.pdf](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf)).

â€‹The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they have complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. 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 order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

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## **Construction industry inspects the epidemic control measures at construction sites**

Amid the severe COVID-19 epidemic situation, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA), with the support of the Development Bureau, will enhance inspection of construction sites.

"The new round of site inspection will start from tomorrow (January 25). The inspection teams of the CIC and the HKCA will proactively review the preventive measures adopted at various construction sites, such as management of site entrances (including the situation of vaccination and regular testing of construction workers), provision of ventilation facilities and rest area arrangement, and will offer recommendations for improvement as necessary, with a view to enabling contractors to continue to strengthen the precautionary measures on site, and at the same time raise the workers' awareness of COVID-19 prevention", a spokesman for the Development Bureau said today (January 24).

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, construction sites have been implementing various epidemic control measures to keep the site hygienic. The CIC and the HKCA have also been reviewing the preventive arrangement on site, and encouraging all site personnel to receive vaccination as soon as possible.

In addition, the works departments have reminded contractors of public works projects again to ensure strict compliance with the precautionary measures at construction sites and will continue to carry out site inspections regularly.

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## **Queen Elizabeth Hospital staff member tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) made the following

announcement today (January 24) regarding an Operation Assistant (OPA) who tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A 29-year-old OPA of QEH, who lives with family members in Ying Kwai House in Kwai Chung Estate tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19 yesterday (January 23) while undergoing mandatory quarantine at Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre with stable condition.

He is responsible for security and traffic control duties in the QEH. He did not have any contact with patient and was equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment. He last went to work on January 21 and attended the respirator fit test in infection control team on the same day. During the testing procedure which involved repeated breath test for about 30 minutes, the staff member handling the test had not worn eye protection. As a precautionary consideration, the staff member concerned was classified as a close contact and required to be quarantined.

The hospital's infection control team has conducted contact tracing and 23 staff members from the security unit are classified as other contacts.

Thorough cleaning and disinfection in the offices, changing room and Respirator Fit Test Centre have been arranged. The QEH will continue to communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.

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## **Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 24), 30 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12775, 12866, 12644, 12673, 12709, 12727, 12728, 12742, 12758, 12752, 12788, 12769, 12714, 12785, 12773, 12807, 12821, 12841, 12878, 12874, 12887, 12888, 12906, 12942, 12949, 12975, 12996, 13005, 13028 and 13105) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 602 patients have been discharged.

A total of 426 patients who had tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre, the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo and eight public hospitals. All of them are in stable condition.

The HA 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.