

# CHP investigates six cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus involving Silka Seaview Hotel Hong Kong

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 16) said that it is investigating six cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus (cases 12891, 12893, 12895, 12981, 12994 and 13045) involving Silka Seaview Hotel Hong Kong in Yau Ma Tei.

All of the above-mentioned six cases stayed at Silka Seaview Hotel Hong Kong for compulsory quarantine after arrival in Hong Kong from abroad. Cases 12893 and 12895 (arrived in Hong Kong on January 2) stayed in room 413 and both tested positive on January 6; while case 12994 (arrived in Hong Kong on December 25, 2021) stayed in the adjacent room on the same floor (room 414) and tested positive on January 10.

Also, case 12891 (arrived in Hong Kong on January 4) stayed in room 1205 and tested positive on January 6; the person who lived together with him who was sent to quarantine centre on January 8 tested positive on January 9 (case 12981); whereas case 13045 (arrived in Hong Kong on December 20, 2021) stayed in the adjacent room on the same floor (room 1206). Her several tests conducted during quarantine all tested negative and upon completion of the compulsory quarantine, she returned to Tung Moon House, Tai Hang Tung Estate, 83 Tai Hang Tung Road, Sham Shui Po on January 10. She later tested positive at a community testing centre on January 14.

According to the whole genome sequencing conducted by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, the genetic sequences of cases 12893, 12895 and 12994 are highly similar, suggesting that the three cases are very likely to be epidemiologically linked. Separately, the genome sequencing for cases 12891, 12981 and 13045 is ongoing.

In view of the whole genome sequencing results and investigations on the epidemiological linkage of the cases, the CHP conducted site inspection at the hotel with the relevant government departments and experts today to further investigate and examine if environmental factors were involved in the infection of the cases. Opinions from experts suggested that the air flows in the rooms and corridors may have led to the spread of virus to another room.

The CHP took into account the opinions from experts and decided to carry out prudent measures on infectious disease control. The CHP will arrange for persons who had stayed in the rooms adjacent to and opposite to room 413 from January 2 to 7 and persons who had stayed in the rooms adjacent to and opposite to room 1205 from January 4 to 8 to undergo 14 days of compulsory quarantine at quarantine centre.

The Government announced earlier that starting from January 17, Silka Seaview Hotel Hong Kong will be used as a quarantine hotel for close contacts of cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus. The hotel has temporarily ceased to be a designated quarantine hotel under the Designated Quarantine Hotel Scheme and ceased taking reservations for inbound travellers since January 12. All persons originally undergoing quarantine at Silka Seaview Hotel Hong Kong were arranged to transfer to other designated quarantine hotels to continue their quarantine in accordance with infection control guidelines.

The CHP's epidemiological investigation is ongoing.

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## **Government tightens boarding and quarantine requirements for places with Omicron cases detected**

The Government announced today (January 16) that in view of the latest global developments of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Bhutan will be specified as a Group A specified place from 0.00am on January 19 to tighten the boarding and quarantine requirements for relevant inbound travellers.

To manage and prevent the importation risks posed by Omicron cases, the Government continues to employ the most stringent measures to guard against importation of cases. Overseas places where Omicron cases have been detected that may lead to local transmission and exportation of cases will be specified as Group A specified places. Noting that the detection of Omicron cases was confirmed in Bhutan, the Government will specify it as a Group A specified place from 0.00am on January 19. Non-Hong Kong residents who have stayed there within 21 days will not be allowed to enter Hong Kong. Hong Kong residents can only board a flight for Hong Kong if they have been fully vaccinated and hold a recognised vaccination record. They will have to undergo compulsory quarantine in a designated quarantine hotel for 21 days upon returning to Hong Kong, with six tests to be conducted during quarantine, followed by compulsory testing in a community testing centre on the 26th day of arrival in Hong Kong.

Details on the relevant boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for respective specified places can be found at [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html).

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 effect the above measures.

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## CHP reminds relevant residents to comply with “restriction-testing declaration” operation on case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 16) reminded members of the public that "restriction-testing declaration" (RTD) have been made for the residence of one of the cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus the CHP is following up. The CHP strongly reminds relevant residents that they must comply with the RTD operation. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the RTD is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The case involves a 23-year-old female patient living in 2-4 Tung Sing Road, Aberdeen. She works in Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay and last went to work on January 15. She has no recent travel history. She developed runny nose, sore throat and cough on January 11. She submitted a deep throat saliva sample on January 15 and the sample tested preliminarily positive, carrying the L452R mutant strain with a Ct value of about 21. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on August 21 and September 16, 2021 in Hong Kong.

The CHP is now investigating the places where the patient visited during incubation period and will carry out whole genome sequencing analysis and compare with cases reported in Hong Kong earlier in order to ascertain the infection source. The CHP also urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk, to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.

The Government has made an RTD tonight for the building where the patient resided (2-4 Tung Sing Road, Aberdeen, excluding the shops located on G/F of 2-8 Tung Sing Road). The places where the patient had visited during the incubation period will also be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

The spokesman for the CHP said, "The Government has remained vigilant

and has been closely monitoring the latest scientific data on mutant strains as well as the epidemic situation of various places. The most stringent anti-epidemic measures will be implemented to prevent the mutant strains from spreading in the local community."

At the moment, the adverse impact on the epidemic situation caused by the newly emerged mutant strains is not fully known yet, but vaccination is still essential to prevent severe cases and deaths from COVID-19 infection. The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)).

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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 16), 27 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12514, 12518, 12548, 12554, 12569, 12577, 12599, 12611, 12617, 12620, 12632, 12639, 12655, 12667, 12681, 12683, 12703, 12708, 12730, 12736, 12739, 12749, 12761, 12770, 12796, 12804 and 12843) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 393 patients have been discharged.

A total of 388 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 a public hospital. All of them are in stable condition.

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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.

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## **CHP investigates seven confirmed and four asymptomatic additional SARS-**

# CoV-2 virus cases and updates quarantine requirements for close contacts of locally acquired cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 16) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 16, the CHP was investigating seven additional confirmed cases and four additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 11 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours), while one earlier tested positive case (Case 13022) turned out to be a re-positive case after investigation. This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 12 864 so far and starting from January 1 recorded, with 174 asymptomatic cases and three re-positive cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 041 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of eight imported cases, one case epidemiologically linked with imported case, and two possibly import-related cases. All of the cases involved mutant strains. The patients comprise five males and six females, aged 22 to 74. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

The case epidemiologically linked with imported case is 13039 (74-year-old male who is a household contact of case 12860). The two possibly import-related cases are 13041 (40-year-old female who is a cargo aircraft cabin cleaning worker working at the Hong Kong International Airport) and 13045 (43-year-old female who conducted compulsory quarantine at Silka Seaview Hotel Hong Kong in Yau Ma Tei after arrival in Hong Kong from Pakistan, during which her six tests conducted all tested negative. Upon completion of the compulsory quarantine, she returned to Tung Moon House, Tai Hang Tung Estate, 83 Tai Hang Tung Road, Sham Shui Po. She later tested positive at a community testing centre).

A total of 363 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 2 to 15). Sixty of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, two are local cases, and the rest are imported cases.

Taking into consideration the relatively short incubation period of infection with the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP announced on January 10 the updated quarantine requirements for close contacts of locally acquired cases, shortening their quarantine period from 21 days to 14 days. Also, a number of persons undergoing quarantine recently submitted applications to shorten the quarantine period in quarantine centre by providing their COVID-19 vaccination records in accordance with established arrangement. The CHP will

conduct a special arrangement starting tomorrow, under which those who have finished the 14 days of quarantine at quarantine centre (except for those under Cap. 599E) will be tested for the virus. If they test negative, they will be arranged to leave the quarantine centre in a gradual and orderly manner. Their original 21-day quarantine period will be shortened for one to seven days. Afterwards, they have to undergo self-monitoring at home for the remaining days of their original quarantine period. Though they will not be prohibited from going out during self-monitoring, they should monitor their health conditions, maintain social distance with other people and avoid social gatherings. They are also subject to testing at a community testing centre on Day 19, counting from the last day of exposure to the case tested positive.

Also, as a passenger flight (U0705) operated by Hong Kong Express Airways arriving in Hong Kong from Bangkok, Thailand, on January 14 had one passenger who tested positive upon arrival, and one passenger who failed to comply with the requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H), the DH thus invoked Cap. 599H to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Bangkok operated by Hong Kong Express Airways in Hong Kong from January 16 to 29.

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) ).

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 had 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.

With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures in the next two weeks, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed, "The global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."