

# CHP announces reclassification of case 11 952 and advice on enhanced infection control measures for ramp handling at airport

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 16) announced that after taking into consideration the latest epidemiological information and genetic sequencing findings, the CHP has reclassified case 11 952 from a local case with unknown sources to epidemiologically linked with imported cases.

The CHP has been actively conducting epidemiological investigations into case 11 952. The genetic analysis of case 11 952 was earlier found to be related to genomes of four imported cases from Russia (cases 11 947, 11 887, 11 926 and 11 938). According to the CHP's epidemiological investigations, case 11 952 worked as a porter at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and among the flights that he had served during the incubation period, there was one confirmed case, 11 947, affecting an aircrew member of flight RL9933 arriving from Moscow on July 6. While he had no direct contact with case 11 947, he had stayed and worked in the cabin for several hours of this flight where some aircrew members had stayed in the plane all along. The CHP considered that case 11 952 was likely to be infected from infected cabin crew on flight RL9933 on July 6. The CHP has today reclassified case 11 952 from a local case with unknown sources to epidemiologically linked with imported cases.

After the reclassification, a total of 28 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (July 2 to 15), including 26 imported cases and two import-related cases.

In light of the above epidemiological investigation findings, the CHP conducted a joint site visit with the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) and the Labour Department on July 14 to some locations in the HKIA where case 11 952 had performed duties. During the joint site visit, the CHP also reviewed the ramp handling operation at the HKIA. Infection control advice has been given to the AAHK and the relevant ramp handling agents, including avoidance of contact between local workers and non-local air crew by changing operational arrangements, wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment during operations and strict compliance of mask wearing and hand hygiene while working inside the aircraft.

Moreover, as an important part of the COVID-19 infection control strategy of preventing the importation of cases and the spreading of the virus in the community, and on the consideration that airport staff may have a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 from outside Hong Kong, while they are encouraged to complete the course of COVID-19 vaccination, the Government

will also issue compulsory testing notices (CTN) for all airport staff who has as his/her place of work at Terminal 1, Apron or Midfield Concourse of the HKIA, and they have to undergo testing in accordance with the following schedules regardless of their COVID-19 vaccination history:

1. Working period: July 18 to 24, 2021
  - CTN issued on July 12 with testing deadline on July 17.
  - If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between July 10 and July 12, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the CTN.
2. Working period: July 25 to 31, 2021
  - CTN to be issued on July 19 with testing deadline on July 24.
  - No prior test will be accepted.
3. Working period: August 1 to 7, 2021
  - CTN to be issued on July 26 with testing deadline on July 31.
  - No prior test will be accepted.

The CHP said that continual strong support of members of the airport community for the implementation of various anti-epidemic measures is essential to the protection of public health in Hong Kong. The CHP will continue to monitor the infection control measures at the HKIA and enhancement measures will be implemented whenever necessary.