

CHP follows up on cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus related to pet shops and announces environmental samples results of relevant pet shops

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 20) said it is following up on two cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 related to pet shops.

The first case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus involves a 30-year-old female living in Shing Him House (Block H), Tin Shing Court, 3 Tin Ching Street, Tin Shui Wai. She visited Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay on January 11 and bought a hamster and had contact with case 13047 (staff of Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay). She was classified as a close contact and was arranged to undergo quarantine at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre on January 18. She tested preliminarily positive on January 19. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on May 14 and June 12, 2021 in Hong Kong.

The second case tested preliminarily positive involves a 23-year-old female living in Mei Yue House, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Shek Kip Mei. She visited one of the Little Boss shops at Tung Choi Street, Mong Kok and bought a hamster on January 4. She developed runny nose on January 17 and went to a community testing centre for test on January 19. She tested preliminarily positive subsequently. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on July 13 and August 4, 2021 in Hong Kong.

The CHP earlier collected 88 environmental samples from the Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay and its warehouse in Tai Po. To follow-up the related infection situation, the CHP has, as at January 20 evening, collected a total of 604 environmental samples from 31 pet shops and relevant warehouses. Apart from the positive test results of the 18 environmental samples collected at the Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay and its warehouse in Tai Po as announced earlier, the latest laboratory testing results revealed that seven of the samples collected from four additional pet shops (I Love Rabbit at 87-99 Kau Yuk Road, Yuen Long; I Love Rabbit at 25-27 Lee Garden Road, Causeway Bay; Little Boss at 187 Tung Choi Street, Mong Kok; and Little Boss at Kai Wan Building, 142-146 Tung Choi Street, Mong Kok) also tested positive.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department collected samples from hamsters at the pet shop earlier which tested positive. Based on the results of epidemiological investigation and laboratory findings the CHP possesses at this stage, it could not be ruled out preliminarily that the positive test results of the environmental samples are caused by the pets

infected with the virus.

Also, as a prudent measure, the four newly added pet shops will be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues from January 7 to January 18 need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date. The staff members of the four shops will be arranged to undergo compulsory quarantine at the quarantine centre.

Meanwhile, the Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" (RTD) tonight for the building where the aforementioned 30-year-old female patient resided (Shing Him House (Block H), Tin Shing Court, 3 Tin Ching Street, Tin Shui Wai) and persons who resided or worked at the building will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where the patient had visited during the incubation periods 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.

â€‹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.