

CHP investigates 13 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, April 13, the CHP was investigating 13 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 608 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 607 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, 10 are imported cases and one is a local case with unknown source, while the remaining two cases are epidemiologically linked with a local case.

Meanwhile, the CHP is continuing its investigation at Block 3, Oi Fai House, Yau Oi Estate in Tuen Mun. Subsequent to the announcement of seven cases involving five units 09, 31 and 32 earlier (two units of which on 22nd Floor), the CHP today has detected one more confirmed case on 22nd Floor of Block 3, Oi Fai House. The CHP decided to carry out more prudent measures on infection control and will further issue quarantine orders to all the remaining asymptomatic residents on 22nd Floor of Block 3, Oi Fai House and transfer them to quarantine centres; symptomatic residents will be sent to the hospital for treatment.

A total of 140 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 30 to April 12), including 28 local cases of which nine are from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

As a passenger flight (EK384), operated by Emirates arriving from Dubai, United Arab Emirates and Bangkok, Thailand to Hong Kong on April 11, had five passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 through specimens collected at the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit landing of passenger flights from Dubai and Bangkok operated by Emirates in Hong Kong from April 13 to 26.

In addition, the Government will further tighten the flight suspension mechanism. With effect from tomorrow (April 14), the criteria for invoking Cap. 599H to prohibit landing of passenger flights in Hong Kong will be tightened to: (a) A same passenger flight has 3 or more [current 5 or more] passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival test; or (b) A passenger flight has 2 or more passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival test on any two flights from the relevant original port of the same airline within a

7-day period [current 3 or more in two consecutive flights], the passenger flights from the relevant original port of the airline concerned will be prohibited from landing in Hong Kong for 14 days. While the remaining current criteria, i.e. a passenger flight has 1 or more passenger(s) confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival test and 1 or more non-compliant case(s) – i.e. failed to comply with the requirement(s) specified under Cap.599H, on the same flight, will remain unchanged.

Meanwhile, the Government will impose an additional flight suspension criteria to run in parallel that if a total of 5 or more passengers with N501Y mutant strain are confirmed by arrival tests from any flight(s) originating from a specific country within a 7-day period, all flights from all airlines departing that specific country will be prohibited from landing in Hong Kong for 14 days.

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The Regulation (Cap. 599J) also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

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).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into

drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.