

CHP investigates 251 confirmed and 48 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 315 pending cases status

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 7) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 7, the CHP was investigating 251 additional confirmed cases, 48 additional asymptomatic cases and 315 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 614 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). Hong Kong has recorded a total of 16 022 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of seven imported cases and 607 locally acquired cases. The CHP is actively investigating their sources of infection to see whether they are epidemiologically linked with previous cases.

As at 4pm today, a total of 2 123 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 24 to February 6). Six-hundred-and-three of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related, 563 are local cases/possibly local case, 734 are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases. A list of buildings related to the cases is available at the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Separately, to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus, the CHP has arranged/will arrange the residents concerned of the following building(s), where cases suspectedly related to environmental factors (including vertical/horizontal transmission, adjacent yard area and shared pipes) were detected, to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre:

- Kai Yan House, Kai Tin Estate, Lam Tin: residents of units 15 on 26th to 35th floors;
- Him Tat House, On Tat Estate, Kwun Tong: residents of units 03 and 04 on 21st to 28th floors;
- Willow House, So Uk Estate, Cheung Sha Wan: residents of units 12 on 20th to 28th floors.

Also, as the passenger flight (CX724) operated by Cathay Pacific arriving in Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on February 5 had four passengers who tested positive upon arrival, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit the landing of passenger flights in Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur operated by Cathay Pacific from February 7 to 20.

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).

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.

â€‹â€‹The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the local situation of COVID-19 infection became severe recently and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility. With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with the social distancing measures, avoid going out 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.