

CHP investigates 253 confirmed and 64 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 34 pending cases status

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 5) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 5, the CHP was investigating 253 additional confirmed cases, 64 additional asymptomatic cases and 34 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 351 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 15 066 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of nine imported cases and 342 locally acquired cases. For the locally acquired cases, the CHP is actively investigating their sources of infection to see whether they are epidemiologically linked with previous cases. Two-hundred-and-ninety-three of the cases involve mutant strains, the mutation test results of 37 cases are pending and the viral load of the remaining 21 cases is insufficient for mutation tests. For case details and contact tracing information, please see www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/20220205_covid19_daily_annex.pdf or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk). Case status and classification may be subject to changes when there is new information available during epidemiological investigation and latest information is shown on "COVID-19 Thematic Website".

As at 4pm today, a total of 1 595 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 22 to February 4). Six-hundred-and-eighty-six of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related, 213 are local cases, 466 are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases.

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:

- Hing Ping House, Tai Hing Estate, Tuen Mun: residents of units 29 on all floors;
- 104 Fuk Wing Street, Sham Shui Po: residents of units A and C on all floors;
- Sau Tai House, Fu Tai Estate, Tuen Mun: residents of units 08 and 09 on 1st to 10th floor and 39th to 40th floor;

- Po Ning House, Po Lam Estate, Tseung Kwan O: residents of units 06 on 13th to 22nd floors, units 08 and 10 on 10th to 12th floor, and units 07-18 on 10th floor;
- Leung Chi House, Leung King Estate, Tuen Mun: residents of units 32 on 5th to 12th floor.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that 190 cases (See Annex) announced earlier carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. There are so far 1 024 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

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 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. 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 recently tightened social distancing measures, 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.