

CHP investigates nine confirmed and 24 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and 26 additional Omicron cases and updates classification of case 12767 and test results relating to "Spectrum of the Seas"

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 6) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 6, the CHP was investigating nine additional confirmed cases and 24 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 33 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). In addition, among the earlier cases reported since January 1, there are 15 asymptomatic cases at time of reporting changed to confirmed cases after hospital admission. This brings a total number of confirmed cases to 12 732 so far and starting from January 1 recorded 100 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 12 832 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 28 imported cases and five cases epidemiologically linked with imported case. Thirty of the cases involved mutant strains while the mutation test results of three cases are pending. The patients comprise 13 males and 20 females, aged 16 to 81. Among the imported cases, one of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and 27 from Group A specified places (high-risk). Twelve patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport and 16 tested positive during quarantine.

Cases 12805, 12806, 12821, 12822 and 12825 are the five cases epidemiologically linked with imported case. Cases 12805, 12806, 12821 and 12825 are related to an earlier case 12754 (family member of imported case 12676 living together). Case 12805 involves a 43-year-old female patient (a foreign domestic helper). Her employer is a close contact of case 12754. The patient developed symptoms including fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat on January 2. She was sent to hospital on January 4 and tested positive on the same day. Case 12806 involves a 48-year-old female patient, who is a close contact of 12754. She developed headache, cough and sore throat on January 2 and was sent to hospital on January 4. Her test conducted on the same day tested positive. The CHP has announced the case details of the above-mentioned two cases yesterday (January 5) (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/05/P2022010500015.htm). Cases 12821 involves a 59-year-old female patient, who is a close contact of case 12754.

She is asymptomatic and went to a community testing centre for test in the morning on January 4. She was arranged to undergo quarantine at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC) on the same day. Her test result subsequently tested positive. Case 12825 involves a 63-year-old male patient, who is a household contact of a close contact of case 12754. He developed cough on January 4 and was arranged to the PBQC in the small hours on January 5. His specimen collected on the same day tested positive. The remaining case epidemiologically linked with imported case, 12822, is related to Moon Palace and involves a 62-year-old female. She had a meal at Moon Palace from around 12.30pm to 1.45pm on the same day (December 27, 2021) when the earlier cases tested positive visited the restaurant. She developed headache on December 30 and was arranged to conduct quarantine at the PBQC in the small hours on January 4. Her specimen collected on the same day tested positive. The CHP has announced the case details of the above-mentioned three cases yesterday (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/05/P2022010500820.htm).

After comparing the genetic sequencing, it was confirmed by the PHLSB that the genomes of the case 12767 were identical to the genomes of an imported case earlier (case 12676). Case 12767 is thus reclassified from a local case with unknown sources to epidemiologically linked with imported case.

Moreover, earlier investigation of the CHP revealed that nine close contacts of case 12754 boarded the cruise ship "Spectrum of the Seas" on January 2 which embarked on a "cruise-to-nowhere". The CHP has immediately requested the cruise ship to return earlier than scheduled. After the cruise ship arrived and docked yesterday morning, the CHP immediately arranged testing for the passengers and crew on board, totaling 3700 people. Their test results were all negative. Also, the CHP has arranged the nine close contacts and their three household contacts who also boarded the cruise ship to undergo quarantine at a quarantine centre for 21 days, as well as another 18 close contacts of them on the cruise ship to undergo quarantine at a quarantine centre for four days. No one tested positive so far. For prudence's sake, the cruise ship is included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN). Specified persons who had been on board the cruise ship at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing yesterday and tomorrow.

A total of 250 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 23, 2021, to January 5, 2022). Thirteen of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12630 to 12632, 12634 to 12636, 12638 to 12648, 12650 to 12652, 12655, 12674 to 12677 and 12726 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 140 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, as the passenger flight (RA409) operated by Nepal Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from Kathmandu, Nepal, on January 4, 2022 and the passenger flight (CX922) operated by Cathay Pacific arriving in Hong Kong

from Cebu, the Philippines, on January 4, 2022, each had five 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 Kathmandu operated by Nepal Airlines and from Cebu operated by Cathay Pacific from January 6 to 19, 2022.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded that 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).

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (January 7):

- Crowne Plaza Hong Kong Kowloon East, 3 Tong Tak Street, Tseung Kwan O
- Block 1, Grandeur Garden, 2-12 Chik Fai Street, Tai Wai, Sha Tin
- Block 2, Grandeur Terrace, 88 Tin Shui Road, Tin Shui Wai
- Tower 6, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase II, 1 Kin Tung Road, Tung Chung (excluding the Greenfield English (International) Kindergarten (Tung Chung) located on the ground floor of Tower 6, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase II and Tower 7, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast)
- The Pottinger Hong Kong, 74 Queen's Road Central, Central
- Tower 2, Granville Garden, 18 Pik Tin Street, Tai Wai
- Block 2, Tsui Ning Garden, 2 Fung On Street, Tuen Mun
- Chesterfield Mansion, 11 Kingston Street, Causeway Bay
- Causeway Tower, 16-22 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the reported cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

â€‹The spokesman for the CHP stressed, "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, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."