

# CHP investigates seven additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and follows up on cases suspected of providing false information

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, August 29, the CHP was investigating seven additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 108 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 107 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases.

A total of 68 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (August 15 to 28) including a local case with unknown sources, while the rest are imported cases.

The CHP is investigating an imported case involving a 68-year-old male patient who carries the L452R mutant strain (Case 12 102). He lives at Sunrise, Discovery Bay, Lantau Island and travelled to the UK on August 15. He returned to Hong Kong on August 25 by flight CX252 and the result of his specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) on the same day was tested negative for COVID-19. Subsequently, his sample collected on August 27 at a designated quarantine hotel was tested positive for COVID-19. The test result from the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) revealed that the patient carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry N501Y or E484K mutant genes. The patient developed symptoms like cough, sore throat and running nose since August 25. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case is continuing. As a prudent measure, the building where he resided (Sunrise, Discovery Bay) and the places he had visited during the incubation period had been included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified date.

Meanwhile, the CHP is also investigating a re-positive overseas case of COVID-19 carrying the L452R mutant strain which involves a 29-year-old female patient. According to the latest information, she travelled to the UK, Spain and Portugal since end of June and returned to Hong Kong on August 19 by flight EK384. Her specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC at HKIA tested negative for COVID-19. The patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination on March 18 and April 8 in Hong Kong (Comirnaty vaccine). Her blood specimen collected on June 23 was tested positive for anti-spike protein antibody. She stayed in a designated quarantine hotel from August 19 to 25 and then lives at 208, Shek O Village, Shek O after completion of her hotel quarantine.

Under the compulsory testing requirement, her specimen collected on August 27 at a community testing centre was tested positive for COVID-19. The test result from the DH's PHLSB revealed that the patient carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry N501Y or E484K mutant genes.

According to information provided by the patient, she developed symptoms in early August and was tested positive for COVID-19 in Portugal. She underwent self-isolation and was tested negative prior to departure in Portugal. She has been asymptomatic all along after returning to Hong Kong. The CHP has classified the case as a re-positive overseas case.

As a prudent measure, the building where she resided (208, Shek O Village, Shek O) and places she had visited during the incubation period had been included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified date.

Separately, as two passenger flights arrived in Hong Kong on August 27, namely PR300 operated by Philippine Airlines arriving from Manila, the Philippines to Hong Kong, and TK083 operated by Turkish Airlines arriving from Istanbul, Turkey to Hong Kong, each had three passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival testing, 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 from Manila and Istanbul respectively operated by the above airlines in Hong Kong from August 29 to September 11.

In addition, regarding the operators of the two goods vessels "Asia Energy" and "Thor Monadic" who were suspected of providing false information to the DH during the application for free pratique, the DH has reported the cases to the Police for the suspected contravention of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) by the vessels' operators. Investigation is ongoing.

In view of the fact that many recent imported cases have joined non-essential travel after vaccination, 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 urged 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)."

The spokesman reminded, "If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommended the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children travelling."

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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

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](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)). Generally speaking, vaccines can reduce the chance of transmission by those who have been vaccinated. People vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can also generate herd immunity. Moreover, vaccination may help keep people from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19.

The CHP called on members of the public to pay attention to their health condition, seek medical advice early and undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing as soon as possible if respiratory symptoms develop. They should also maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times, to protect themselves against infection and prevent the spread of the disease in the community.

On a personal level, members of the public should put on a surgical mask when they need to go out. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask. Hand hygiene should be performed 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. 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 the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

â€œâ€œTo ensure household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.