

Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation and Prevention and Control of Disease (Disclosure of Information) Regulation gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (February 7) the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Disclosure of Information) Regulation to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus infection with resolute and stringent measures, so as to reduce cross-boundary people flow. The two Regulations will commence at 0.00am tomorrow (February 8).

The specific measures include:

1. Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation

All persons having stayed in the Mainland for any period during the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of nationality and travel documents used, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days.

To ensure sufficient supply of supplies and food in Hong Kong, the Chief Secretary for Administration will, according to the Regulation, exempt certain categories of people from the quarantine requirement. The exemption is applicable to the following four categories of people –

- supplying goods or services required for the normal operation of Hong Kong or the daily needs of the people in Hong Kong;
- for governmental operation;
- for the protection of the safety or health of the people of Hong Kong or the handling of public health emergency; or
- cases of exceptional circumstance that serves the public interest of Hong Kong.

Contravening the quarantine requirement would be a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

2. Prevention and Control of Disease (Disclosure of Information) Regulation

A health officer will be empowered to require a person to disclose or furnish any information relevant to the handling of a state of the public health emergency, such as travel history. The relevant power is extended to other medical practitioners who would have encountered with a person involved in such public health emergency. It would be a criminal offence for any

person to provide false or misleading information to the health officer/medical practitioners concerned. The maximum penalty for failure to comply is a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman said that putting in place the Regulations could further reduce people flow between Hong Kong and the Mainland, minimising the risks for bringing infection into Hong Kong.

The Regulations are made in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599). Section 8 of the Ordinance empowers the Chief Executive in Council to make public health emergency regulation for the purposes of preventing, combating or alleviating the effects of a public health emergency and protecting public health.

The Government had earlier published in the Gazette on January 8, 2020 to include "Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent" as a statutorily notifiable infectious disease under the Ordinance.

"From the public health point of view, the spread of the virus occurs regardless of race, nationality and residency status. It is necessary to reduce as much as possible the flow of people across the boundary, which includes Hong Kong residents, Mainland residents and other travellers. Hong Kong must strictly manage the control points to further reduce the cross-boundary flow of people," said a spokesman.

"The Government will continue to monitor closely the situation including the development of the spread of the disease and the changes in the number of passenger traffic in and out of the boundary, and it will not hesitate to adopt more resolute and severe measures if necessary. All land-based cargo clearance remains normal, so members of the public need not worry about food and other supplies."

â€‹The spokesman strongly appeals to members of the public not to travel to places where there is an outbreak of the disease and to co-operate with the Centre for Health Protection and healthcare staff including providing accurate information about their travel history.

Pointing out that the current supply of surgical masks remains tight, the spokesman appeals to the public to stay at home as much as possible and observe personal hygiene to help reduce the consumption of surgical masks. Expressing once again its gratitude to those healthcare workers who stand fast at their posts against the current epidemic, the Government pledged to do its utmost to provide sufficient protective gear and equipment to front-line officers.