

Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (March 18) the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E). The Regulation introduces a resolute and rigorous measure to combat the global outbreak of the COVID-19 by imposing compulsory quarantine orders on all persons arriving from all places outside China. The Regulation will commence at 0.00am tomorrow (March 19) and take effect for three months.

Under the Regulation, all persons having stayed in overseas countries and territories specified by a general notice in the Gazette 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.

Following the Government's announcement yesterday on the Red Outbound Travel Alert issued on all foreign countries and territories, and in accordance with the Regulation, the Secretary for Food and Health announced by a notice in the Gazette that the compulsory quarantine requirement would apply to arrivals from all places outside China starting from 0.00am on March 19.

Under the Regulation, the relevant person, during the quarantine period, will be quarantined (a) in a place assigned by an authorised officer; or (b) if an authorised officer considers it prudent and appropriate in the circumstances of the case – in a place nominated by the person when the quarantine order is made against the person.

With reference to the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Chief Secretary for Administration may, according to the Regulation, exempt certain categories of people fulfilling the following criteria from the quarantine requirement:

- 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.

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 February 7, 2020 the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), which mandates 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, has remained unchanged.

The Department of Health (DH)'s Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has been closely monitoring the situation around the world. The global situation in particular in Europe is rapidly evolving with a continuous surge in the number of affected countries and confirmed cases. Locally transmitted cases are reported in many countries.

The DH will closely monitor the situation. Any updates will be issued through the media, the Government's "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html) and the DH's webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv). Any enquiries on health information on COVID-19 may be addressed to the DH's hotline at (852) 2125 1122 (operating daily from 8am to midnight).