

DH to further extend and adjust health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers from overseas

The Department of Health today (March 13) announced that the health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers from overseas will be further extended and adjusted in response to the latest situations of COVID-19.

Following the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's announcement today that the Red Outbound Travel Alert was issued on certain European countries (Schengen Area), including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, the DH will strengthen health quarantine measures on people arriving from these countries and demand them to undergo compulsory home quarantine.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared on March 11 that the COVID-19 outbreak can be described as a pandemic. As at 6pm today, over 50 000 confirmed cases were reported in a total of 120 countries/areas outside Mainland China. According to WHO, at least 72 countries/areas have reported locally transmitted cases. Large scale outbreaks with active community transmissions are occurring in Korea, Italy and Iran.

A spokesman for the DH said that the 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 CHP has been reviewing and will timely adjust the health quarantine measures and their feasibility in view of the latest developments and risk in different countries. As the capacity of quarantine facilities in Hong Kong is limited at the moment, the Government has decided that the current quarantine centres need to be reserved for quarantine of close contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19. Hence, the health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers from overseas will be adjusted as follows:

1. Quarantine at quarantine centre

People arriving in Hong Kong who have been to the following countries/areas in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents, will have to stay in a quarantine centre for quarantine.

1) Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do in Korea (also applies to non-Hong Kong

residents from 0.00am on March 17)

2) Iran

3) Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy

2. Compulsory home quarantine

Starting from 0.00am tomorrow (March 14), people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to the following countries/areas in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents, will be subject to compulsory home quarantine.

1) Italy (except Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions)

2) Bourgogne-Franche-Comte and Grand Est regions in France

3) North Rhine-Westphalia region in Germany

4) Hokkaido in Japan

5) La Rioja, Madrid and Pais Vasco regions in Spain

Starting from 0.00am on March 17, people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to the following countries/areas in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents, will be subject to compulsory home quarantine.

1) Korea (except Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do) (also applies to non-Hong Kong residents)

2) Schengen Area in Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy (except Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions), Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland)

Situations in other countries

Of note, the number of cases in the United Kingdom and United States has been on the rise. Imported cases from the United Kingdom, United States, India and Egypt have also been recorded in Hong Kong, indicating community transmissions in these countries. Members of the public who are currently outside Hong Kong, in particular those studying abroad in Europe or America who might now or will be on term break, are urged to come back to Hong Kong as soon as possible if they have plans to return. The Government noted that local airlines are planning to adjust their carrying capacity to address the demand of flights to Hong Kong. At the same time, these people should also pay attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 outbreak in the country where they are in as well as that in neighbouring areas, and consider avoiding non-essential travel. Upon their return to Hong Kong, they should put on a surgical mask for 14 days and stay home as far as possible.

The spokesman reiterated that in view of proliferation of the disease around the world, members of the public are advised to consider avoiding all

non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. If it is unavoidable to travel to countries/areas outside Hong Kong, they should put on a surgical mask and continue to do so for 14 days upon their return to Hong Kong. For the situation of various countries/areas, please refer to the [information](#) uploaded onto the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).