

DH to further strengthen health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers from overseas

Following the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's announcement today (March 15) on the Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) issued on the Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States in response to the latest situations of COVID-19, the Department of Health (DH) will strengthen health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers arriving from these three countries as well as Egypt of which a Red OTA is in force. As the situation around the world is evolving rapidly, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

Starting from 0.00am on March 19, the DH's Port Health Division officers will issue quarantine orders under the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) for compulsory home quarantine to people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to the Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Egypt in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents.

Meanwhile, the quarantine measures announced earlier for people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to Korea, Iran, Hokkaido in Japan and Schengen Area in Europe (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) in the past 14 days remain unchanged.

A spokesman for the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) said that the Government has all along remained vigilant against the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Mainland and overseas. In the past 14 days (from March 2 to 4pm on March 15), 26 (56.5 per cent) out of 46 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hong Kong are imported cases while seven other cases (15.2 per cent) involve patients visiting places outside Hong Kong during part of the incubation period. The CHP has been reviewing and will timely adjust the health quarantine measures and their feasibility by taking into account the latest developments and risk in different countries as well as the existing capacity of quarantine facilities in Hong Kong, measures adopted by other governments and to ensure the normal operation of local healthcare system. 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.

In view of proliferation of the disease and continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are again urged to avoid 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.

The spokesman said that the Government has been conducting detailed assessments for formulating port health measures in response to the occurrence of outbreaks in countries or areas outside Hong Kong. The assessment will take into account factors such as the number, distribution and rate of increase of infected persons, measures put in place for surveillance and control of the outbreak, and the frequency of visits by Hong Kong residents. The Government will review and adjust the measures in view of the developments.

Before travelling outside Hong Kong, members of the public should be aware of the potential health risk and applicable quarantine arrangements upon returning 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).