

Further anti-epidemic measure for performing venues implemented by Government to protect audiences

A Government spokesman said today (November 24) that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will implement a further anti-epidemic measure at its performance venues from November 30. If performers are not able to wear masks during a performance with a live audience, they must take a Government-recognised coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) test 72 hours prior to their performance. They can only participate in the performance after they have obtained a negative test result in order to protect audiences.

Since October 1, all performance venues of the LCSD have resumed performances or programmes with live audiences with the following anti-epidemic measures:

- (a) The number of audience members in performance venues such as concert halls, theatres, auditoria, cultural activities halls and arenas is limited to 75 per cent of their original capacity. Consecutive seats are limited to four with seats evenly distributed;
- (b) In activities to be held in minor facilities of the performance venues such as rehearsal rooms, music/dance studios and lecture/conference/function rooms, no more than four participants, including the instructor in a cluster, can be conducted, with appropriate distance maintained between groups. The number of users in minor facilities is limited to 75 per cent of their original capacity;
- (c) Audiences must wear their own masks in the venues; and
- (d) Backstage staff must wear masks in the venues at all times.

To strike a balance between anti-epidemic efforts and conducting live performances in light of the fluctuating epidemic situation of COVID-19, the Centre for Health Protection issued the Health Advice for Performing Arts on November 5. In response to the advice, the LCSD will implement a further anti-epidemic measure at its performance venues starting from November 30. In addition to the abovementioned requirement that performers who cannot wear masks during a performance with a live audience must take a test 72 hours prior to their performance and obtain a negative result before participating in the performance, depending on the number of days of the performance, a performer has to provide an updated negative test result every 10 days. In case of violation, the LCSD will reserve the right to ban the performers concerned from performing. Relevant details are set out in the Notes to Hirers to be distributed to venue hirers.

Meanwhile, the Government will issue letters to operators of other major non-government performance venues including the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and the Hong Kong Arts Centre to inform them of the latest arrangements at LCSD

performance venues. The Government appeals to all relevant venue operators to require performers who cannot wear masks during a performance to take a test before the performance.

Performers can undergo the COVID-19 test by various means:

- Collect a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority (for time slots for distribution of specimen collection packs and specimen collection, see www.ha.org.hk/haho/ho/covid-19/GOPC_extend_EN.pdf);
- Self-arranged testing provided by private laboratories recognised by the Department of Health (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories.pdf); or
- Attend any of the Community Testing Centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en).