

Government announces latest boarding and quarantine arrangements for persons arriving at Hong Kong under "vaccine bubble" concept

The Government announced today (May 7) that it will adjust the boarding, quarantine and testing arrangements for persons arriving at Hong Kong (including Hong Kong residents returning to Hong Kong) who have completed their COVID-19 vaccination course under the "vaccine bubble" concept. Subject to no significant change to the epidemic situation locally and in relevant overseas places, the relevant measures will be implemented on May 12 at 0.00am.

With reference to the new direction in fighting the pandemic as announced by the Chief Executive on April 12, the Government had announced earlier the adjustments of the boarding and compulsory quarantine grouping today, so as to implement the boarding, quarantine, and testing arrangements for persons arriving at Hong Kong based on risk levels. Overseas places outside China have been categorised under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) into extremely high-risk Group A1 specified places, very high-risk Group A2 specified places, high-risk Group B specified places, medium-risk Group C specified places, and low-risk Group D specified places (details at Annex).

Based on the "vaccine bubble" concept and the risk levels, the Government will further shorten the compulsory quarantine periods suitably for persons arriving at Hong Kong from overseas places, who have not stayed in extremely high-risk or very high-risk places, and who have completed their vaccination course. The compulsory quarantine periods for those arriving at Hong Kong from places in China and have completed their vaccination course will also be shortened accordingly. The relevant persons will still be subject to the relevant compulsory testing arrangements (details at Annex).

Under the new arrangements, persons who have stayed in low-risk Group D specified places, and who have been fully vaccinated, will be subject to compulsory quarantine in designated quarantine hotels for seven days (originally 14 days). They will subsequently be required to self-monitor for seven days and undergo compulsory testing on the 12th day of their arrival at Hong Kong.

For persons who have stayed in medium-risk Group C specified places and high-risk Group B specified places, and who have been fully vaccinated, they will be subject to compulsory quarantine in designated quarantine hotels for 14 days (originally 21 days), and subsequently be required to self-monitor for seven days and undergo compulsory testing on the 16th and 19th day of

their arrival at Hong Kong.

As for extremely high-risk Group A1 specified places and very high-risk Group A2 specified places, the boarding, quarantine, and testing arrangements will remain unchanged. For persons who have stayed in Group A1 specified places for more than two hours, they will not be allowed to board for any passenger flight for Hong Kong. For very high-risk Group A2 specified places, the relevant persons will be subject to compulsory quarantine in designated quarantine hotels for 21 days (with the number of tests to be conducted during the period increased to at least four times), subsequent seven-day self-monitoring, and compulsory testing on the 26th day of their arrival at Hong Kong. The shortened quarantine period for fully vaccinated persons will not be applicable.

As regards persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in places in China (the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan), they are currently subject to 14-day compulsory quarantine at home if they did not return under the Return2hk Scheme. The relevant quarantine arrangements will also be correspondingly adjusted, and the compulsory quarantine period for relevant fully vaccinated persons, whether arriving at Hong Kong via land boundary control points or the airport, will also be shortened from 14 days to seven days, with a subsequent seven-day self-monitoring period and compulsory testing on the 12th day of arrival at Hong Kong.

Fully vaccinated persons means persons who have received the necessary doses as stipulated in guidelines of a COVID-19 vaccination course 14 days prior to their arrival at Hong Kong. For persons arriving at Hong Kong whose vaccines were administered outside Hong Kong, apart from the COVID-19 vaccines already recognised for use in Hong Kong, vaccines on the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Use Listing or Pre-qualification lists, as well as vaccines recognised for use by Stringent Regulatory Authorities as designated by WHO or the National Medical Products Administration would also be accepted. The Government will upload the list of relevant vaccines to the COVID-19 thematic website before the implementation of the measures above, and will update the list from time to time.

At the same time, the Government will also strengthen the arrivals testing arrangements, so as to ensure that even with the adjusted compulsory quarantine arrangements, any possible case would still be caught by testing as far as possible. Apart from the existing pre-departure and/or post arrival tests, depending on the risk levels of places where the persons arrive at Hong Kong come from, and the applicable compulsory quarantine periods, arriving persons will also be subject to more frequent regular testing, including compulsory testing after the completion of compulsory quarantine.

The Government will gazette the relevant updated specifications under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) and Cap. 599H to effect the above measures on May 12.

A Government spokesman said, "The Government will continue to closely monitor the situation, including the developments of the epidemic situation both globally and locally, vaccination progress, and changes in the volume of cross-boundary passenger traffic, and will further adjust the boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for persons arriving at Hong Kong from places with different risks when necessary."

Details on the grouping of specified places and their respective boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html.