

Government employees fully committed to anti-epidemic efforts

As the current epidemic situation remains severe, posing an unprecedented threat to Hong Kong, a government spokesman announced today (March 3) that government departments will continue to provide emergency services and essential public services and release manpower to focus on anti-epidemic work in full swing. The Government will closely monitor the development of the epidemic and review the situation in due course.

The spokesman said that government employees, regardless of the departments they belong to, are putting the fight against the epidemic as the current overriding mission. Regarding comments that the Government arranges for its employees to work from home rather than to engage in anti-epidemic work, the spokesman stressed that all government employees are united and considered the fight against the epidemic as their top priority and most important task. Government employees, whether deployed to work in the office or otherwise, should stand ready at all times when called upon by their departments, no matter what their original/usual duties are.

"To fight against the fifth wave of the epidemic, departments have been making all-out efforts in mobilising their staff to participate in anti-epidemic work. In addition to mobilising a large number of staff to support testing operations, contact tracing, issuing of quarantine orders, etc, the Government has recently stepped up the scale of the 'restriction-testing declaration' operations, involving staff of 39 departments under eight bureaux. The Home Affairs Department has deployed about 1 000 government employees for the operation of the 24-hour telephone hotline since the implementation of the 'StayHomeSafe' Scheme and has been providing support and assistance to members of the public in need, including confirmed patients, persons subject to testing, and persons under home quarantine. As for the additional community isolation and treatment facilities, such as the recently commissioned mobile field hospital, members of the disciplined services have been mobilised to take up management duties. In addition, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau has been co-ordinating anti-epidemic medical supplies, including rapid antigen test kits, masks, proprietary Chinese medicines, etc, from the Mainland, and has been swiftly distributing the supplies arriving in Hong Kong to frontline staff, persons receiving treatment, specified high-risk and target groups, etc, through departments and district organisations. The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau is also planning at full steam the Compulsory Universal Testing scheme, the implementation of which will be supported by a large number of staff to be mobilised by government departments. Staff members of the Civil Service Bureau also spare no effort in increasing the venues for COVID-19 vaccination and their capacity so as to provide protection to members of the public who are yet to be vaccinated as quickly as possible," the spokesman said.

"To further speed up the strengthening of the protective barrier against

the virus among civil servants so as to mitigate any impact on the government's anti-epidemic effort, the Government has updated the Vaccine Pass arrangement for government employees entering government buildings and offices. Under the latest arrangement, apart from government employees who are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination due to medical conditions supported by a valid COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate, all government employees entering government buildings and offices for work-related purposes are required to have received the second vaccine dose before April 1. They must also receive the third vaccine dose before May 16, or within eight months after receiving the second dose, before entering the relevant government premises," the spokesman added.

The spokesman strongly appeals to all employers to allow their staff members to work from home as far as possible to reduce the flow of people and social contact in the community, so as to slow down the spread of the virus as much as possible and enable Hong Kong to win the battle against the virus soon.