

Government further tightens quarantine arrangements for locally based air crew

In light of the latest developments of the global and local epidemic situation, the Government has further tightened the quarantine arrangements for locally based air crew. For all locally based air cargo crew who have laid over at overseas places or Taiwan and are currently subject to self-isolation in designated quarantine hotels (DQHs) for three days, with effect from 0.00am tomorrow (January 1) they will be required to stay in DQHs until obtaining negative results from the polymerase chain reaction-based (PCR) nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 taken on the seventh day following their return to Hong Kong. After leaving DQHs, they will remain subject to multiple PCR nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 regularly during their medical surveillance periods, in order to monitor their health conditions on a continued basis. The measure will further safeguard public health.

Hong Kong's air services are very important for people's daily lives and for the operation of society and the economy. As a contingency plan, the Government will approve and support the operation of more charter cargo flights, and urged local airlines to enhance their management of closed-loop operation and implement measures to alleviate disruptions on capacity, so as to minimise the impact on Hong Kong as far as possible.

Upon the Government's request, the airline concerned is conducting a holistic and in-depth investigation into each of the confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving locally based air crew and will submit detailed reports as soon as possible. The Government expresses deep regret over non-compliance by individual air crew members, and has directed the airline concerned to follow up seriously. The Government has also urged the airline to take effective measures to ensure its air crew strictly comply with the relevant requirements under the anti-epidemic measures so as to prevent recurrence of contraventions. The Government points out that air cargo crew are subject to medical surveillance and those who contravene the conditions in the Notification of Medical Surveillance may be in violation of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation. The Government will review the cases seriously and pursue the cases in accordance with the law if illegal acts are identified.

The Government will continue to review the quarantine arrangements applicable to air crew to cope with the challenges arising from the epidemic, and will endeavour to maintain the essential air cargo services into and out of Hong Kong.