

Government issues Red Outbound Travel Alert on Korea

In view of the health risks arising from the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in Korea, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government today (February 24) issued a Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on the country.

A Government spokesman said, "In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Korea and the close contacts between Hong Kong and Korea, the Government has decided to issue the Red OTA on Korea based on public health considerations. Red OTA urges the public planning to travel to Korea to adjust travel plans and avoid non-essential travel."

For those who are already there, they should –

- pay attention to announcements by local authorities;
- put on a surgical mask all the time;
- avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities and crowded places;
- avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms;
- wear a surgical mask and inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once if experiencing a fever or cough; and
- perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing.

If it is unavoidable to travel to Korea, the public should pay close attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 and the corresponding travel health advice issued by the Department of Health (DH). After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong.

The Food and Health Bureau will closely monitor the situation. Any updates will be issued through the media, the Government's "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html), the DH's webpage (www.gov.hk/ncv) and the Security Bureau's OTA webpage (www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota). Any enquiries on health information on COVID-19 may be addressed to the DH's hotline at (852) 2125 1122 (operating daily from 8am to midnight).

Hong Kong residents in Korea who need assistance may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department at (852) 1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in Republic of Korea (Consular protection hotline: (82) 2755 0572).

In addition, Hong Kong residents are encouraged to use the online Registration of Outbound Travel Information service (www.gov.hk/roti) to register their contact details and itinerary when outside Hong Kong. The information provided allows the DH and AHU of the Immigration Department to disseminate practical information to them through appropriate means, including SMS on mobile phones, on a timely basis when necessary.