

# Government issues Red Outbound Travel Alert on three regions in Italy and highlights public health risks under Red OTA on Iran

In view of the health risks arising from the COVID-19 outbreak in the Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government today (February 28) issued a Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on the three regions. Besides, the Government alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated health risk in Iran under the Red OTA currently in force.

## Italy (Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions)

A Government spokesman said, "In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy which cover Bologna, Milan, Venice and Verona, the Government has decided to issue the Red OTA on the three regions based on public health considerations. Red OTA urges the public planning to travel to Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy to adjust travel plans and avoid non-essential travel."

## Iran

The Government had issued a Red OTA on Iran on January 10, 2020 due to safety concerns. In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the past few days, the Government alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated public health risk in Iran under the existing Red OTA. The existing Red OTA remains in force. The Government urges the public who intend to visit the country should adjust their travel plans and avoid non-essential travel. For those who are already in Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy and in Iran, 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 Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy or Iran, 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.

Hong Kong residents in Italy who need assistance may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at (852) 1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in Italy at consular protection hotline: (39) 3939110852.

Hong Kong residents in Iran who need assistance may call the 24-hour hotline of the AHU of the ImmD at (852)1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in Iran at consular protection hotline: (98) 912-2176035.

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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html)), the DH's webpage ([www.gov.hk/ncv](http://www.gov.hk/ncv)) and the Security Bureau's OTA webpage ([www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota](http://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).

In addition, Hong Kong residents are encouraged to use the online Registration of Outbound Travel Information service ([www.gov.hk/roti](http://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 ImmD to disseminate practical information to them through appropriate means, including SMS on mobile phones, on a timely basis when necessary.

Apart from Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy and Iran, the Government also issued Red OTA on Korea on February 24 in light of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country.