

Government responds to testing arrangements for persons exempted from compulsory quarantine

The Government noticed today (March 19) about the media reports on Government's move to update the "test-and-hold" arrangement at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) for persons exempted from compulsory quarantine by revising their designated holding locations with effect from tomorrow (March 20).

A Government spokesman pointed out that with effect from February 20, 2021, all persons who are exempted from compulsory quarantine have been subject to "test-and-hold" arrangement (i.e. undergo testing and wait for the result at HKIA or designated locations) when entering Hong Kong via the HKIA. Currently, Headland Hotel and Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel are two of the recognised designated holding locations.

The spokesman said that, in view of the shortened waiting time for test results at the HKIA and as a measure to further mitigate the risk of exempted persons' contact with other persons during the holding period, the Government will cancel the designation for Headland Hotel and Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel as designated holding locations with effect from tomorrow (March 20). In other words, all exempted persons (including air crew members) must wait for their test results at the HKIA. The Department of Health has duly notified all the airlines of this arrangement through the Airline Operators' Committee of the HKIA.

The spokesman emphasised that the measure of revising the designated holding locations for the "test-and-hold" arrangement aims to avoid any chances for exempted persons from having unnecessary contacts with other persons before obtaining their negative test results, so as to minimise comprehensively the risk of community transmission brought about by importation of cases, particularly those carrying virus variants. The Government expressed gratitude to all sectors of the community (including the aviation industry) for their understanding and support, as well as their concerted efforts in fighting against the epidemic.