

[HKSAR Government further reduces cross-boundary people flow \(with photo\)](#)

In response to the situation of the novel coronavirus infection and having considered the advice of experts, the Government yesterday (February 3) announced that the consolidation of control points must be taken in a more resolute manner in order to further reduce the flow of people between the Mainland and Hong Kong significantly. Cross-boundary passengers by land or by sea will be converged to Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge control points, while passenger clearance services at four control points – Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Lok Ma Chau and Macau Ferry Terminal – will be suspended. Coupled with the other control point management measures implemented on January 30, the number of control points with passenger clearance services suspended will increase to 10.

A Government spokesman said that a number of measures to reduce the flow of people between the Mainland and Hong Kong were implemented on January 30, yielding a significant result. The number of passenger trips arriving in Hong Kong via all control points (except the airport) on February 2 was 73 019, which has dropped 57 per cent compared to the figure on January 29 before the measures came into effect, with Hong Kong residents (63 316 passenger trips) taking up 87 per cent of the total (73 019 passenger trips). Meanwhile, the Government noted that there were still a large number of Hong Kong residents (31 771 passenger trips) departing via all control points (except the airport) on February 2. As these Hong Kong residents return to Hong Kong from the Mainland, the risk of the disease being imported into Hong Kong will increase.

The spokesman said that, from a public health point of view, the spread of the virus occurs regardless of race, nationality and residency status. It is necessary to reduce as much as possible the flow of people across the border, which should cover Hong Kong residents, Mainland residents and other travellers. Since Hong Kong has close ties with the Mainland in terms of the flow of people and goods, it is necessary to maintain limited and controllable services at control points.

The spokesman said that Hong Kong must strictly manage the control points to reduce the cross-boundary flow of people. As a result, the control point services at four control points – Lo Wu, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, Lok Ma Chau and Macau Ferry Terminal – will be suspended with effect from today (February 4) until further notice. The consolidation of the control points will enable relevant government departments to focus their manpower and carry out more stringent disease control and prevention measures including enquiries, health declarations and body temperature checks at the control points still in service.

Starting from today, people – including Hong Kong residents – travelling between Hong Kong and the Mainland or between Hong Kong and other places will have to use control points at the Hong Kong International Airport, Shenzhen Bay and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge which provide regular services, plus the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal that provides services when cruise liners are berthed.

The spokesman stressed that all land-based cargo clearance remains normal, so members of the public need not worry about food supplies.

The spokesman said that the Government will continue to monitor closely the situation including the development of the spread of the disease and the changes in the number of passenger traffic, pointing out that it will not hesitate to adopt further measures if necessary including imposing a mandatory quarantine on certain inbound travellers. The Government will continue to prepare more quarantine centre facilities to meet the demand. The Department of Health had also announced earlier the arrangement for mandatory home isolation when necessary.

The spokesman said that the Chief Executive wrote to Consuls-General in Hong Kong on February 2, while the Chief Secretary for Administration together with relevant directors of bureaux met with them, explaining in detail the measures taken by Hong Kong in disease prevention and control, which are in line with the World Health Organization's advice. The Consuls-General were requested to convey to their capital that Hong Kong has a robust, multi-faceted and well-tested system that is open and transparent to tackle the current situation. The Government takes the view that suspending air passenger services to Hong Kong or drastic measures such as restrictions against entry of Hong Kong residents are unjustified and unwarranted, and it will maintain close contact with various governments on the issue.

The spokesman appeals to members of the public not to travel to places where there is an outbreak of the disease and to co-operate with the Centre for Health Protection and healthcare staff including providing accurate information about their travel history to enable officers to perform follow-up duties. Pointing out that the current supply of surgical masks remains tight, the spokesman appeals to the public to stay at home as much as possible and observe personal hygiene to help reduce the consumption of surgical masks. Expressing once again its gratitude to those healthcare workers who stand fast at their posts against the current epidemic, the Government pledged to do its utmost to provide sufficient protective gear and equipment to front-line officers.

