

# Hongkong Post's response to media enquiries

In response to the media enquiries today (December 13) about the reported case of a family member of a postman working for the North District Delivery Office tested positive for COVID-19, as well as the arrangements of postal services during the epidemic, Hongkong Post gave a reply as follows:

A postman of the North District Delivery Office (delivery office is the working place of postmen before they set off for delivery duties) was informed by the Department of Health on December 11 that he was identified as close contact and needed to undergo COVID-19 testing as his family member was tested positive. Today, Hongkong Post was notified by the postman of his negative result. The postman concerned will be subject to isolation for 14 days and the arrangements made by the Centre for Health Protection.

In fact, right after learning about the incident on December 11, Hongkong Post immediately arranged for a comprehensive cleaning and disinfection of the North District Delivery Office, including all the public facilities, and took the initiative to contact the relevant authorities to arrange 120 specimen bottles for all other staff of the concerned office yesterday (December 12) for testing on a voluntary basis.

Regarding the service arrangements during the epidemic, as postal services are essential public services, Hongkong Post has endeavoured to make special arrangements by reducing crowds from gathering as far as possible without jeopardising its operation, taking into account the public demand for postal services. As mentioned in the press release issued by Hongkong Post on November 30, all post offices advance their closing hours to 4pm from Monday to Friday. Besides, delivery postmen are released earlier after their completion of work for the day, and the delivery offices concerned will also be closed at an earlier time. For buildings with COVID-19 confirmed cases within the past 14 days, the door delivery service will remain suspended while maintaining the mail delivery to letter boxes in the lobbies for three times a week. As for buildings included in a compulsory testing notice published in the Gazette, Hongkong Post has also suspended door delivery service to such buildings until mid next week.

As a matter of fact, Hongkong Post implemented special work arrangements from late July to August in view of the epidemic situation by that time, including reducing the provision of delivery service to less than once a day and the opening of post offices to three days a week. Such arrangements, on the contrary, led to the increase of crowds at post offices instead, accompanied with mail backlog. During the said period, post offices only opened for business on alternate days, this resulted in the increase of customers by more than 20% on business days, with large number of crowds gathered at post offices at lots of time. Despite that Hongkong Post had arranged for crowd management and social distancing, the situation remained undesirable. Furthermore, as some staff took turn to work from home and mail

items were not handled on a daily basis, this gave rise to a large amount of backlog, causing great impact on and much inconvenience to the public and business sector. Experience from last time shows that postal services are so essential to the public. Hongkong Post considers the present arrangements for business operation, i.e. with post offices opened on a daily basis while closing at an earlier time, more appropriate, and that such arrangements strike a better balance between the operational needs, the safeguarding of the well-being of staff and serving the public.

All along, Hongkong Post has attached great importance to the occupational health and safety and infection control measures for its staff, and will continue to provide frontline staff with protective gear such as protective goggles, face shields, masks, alcohol swabs, alcohol-based handrub and gloves. Hongkong Post also keeps reminding staff to bring and use the protective gear when performing outdoor duties, and take note of their personal hygiene. They are also advised to seek medical advice immediately if feeling unwell.