

Implementation of special COVID-19 testing arrangement for outbound travellers by land starting March 21

In the light of the ongoing severe COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong and the fact that the number of cases remains at a high level, the Government announced today (March 19) the implementation of a special COVID-19 testing arrangement starting March 21 in order to further prevent the exportation of local cases and to support the Mainland's anti-epidemic efforts. Outbound travellers using land boundary control points will be subject to an additional rapid nucleic acid test prior to departure from Hong Kong. As such, the Government recommended relevant travellers to allow ample time for their trips.

From March 21, for persons travelling to the Mainland or Macao by land (i.e. Shenzhen Bay Port or the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port), other than holding a negative result proof of a self-paid nucleic acid test as per the prevailing requirements of relevant authorities (including that the report of which must be issued by a recognised medical testing institution with the specimen collection time indicated, and the time of immigration clearance should be within 48 hours after the specimen collection time), they will also need to undergo a free additional rapid polymerase chain reaction (PCR) nucleic acid test at the control points prior to their departure from Hong Kong. Only those who receive a negative result can continue with their journeys.

The Government will provide the aforementioned special testing service for free at the relevant control points from one hour before the opening of the passenger clearance buildings till one hour before the closure of the passenger clearance buildings. The current operating hours of passenger clearance at the Shenzhen Bay and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge control points are from 10am to 10pm and from 10am to 8pm respectively. Travellers should enquire the latest operating hours of the respective control points before embarking on their trips.

A Government spokesman said, "The process of the rapid PCR nucleic acid test will take about one to two hours. Relevant outbound travellers should allow ample time when travelling to the control points and undergo the test as per the instructions by the staff on site, such that they will have sufficient time to complete their immigration clearance process after obtaining a negative test result."

The spokesman reminded relevant travellers that they would still be subject to the quarantine and testing arrangements of their destinations. The relevant persons should take note of the latest quarantine arrangements in the Mainland and Macao, and make necessary preparations.

The Government is also exploring to correspondingly require travellers bound for the Mainland to undergo an additional rapid PCR nucleic acid test at the Hong Kong International Airport. Details will be announced in due course.