

Latest border control measures for foreign domestic helpers to take effect soon

The Labour Department (LD) today (August 6) reminded foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) and employers that the Government will implement new border control measures on August 9. If FDHs who are currently in the Philippines and Indonesia had been fully vaccinated in Hong Kong before they left Hong Kong, they can come to work in Hong Kong under the new measures.

On August 3, the Government issued a press release (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202108/03/P2021080200985.htm) announcing that overseas inbound travellers will be subject to new border control measures. Under the new measures, Hong Kong residents (including FDHs) who have completed their courses of vaccination and present recognised vaccination records will be allowed to board flights for Hong Kong. Their vaccination records must be issued by a healthcare institution or a relevant authority of the Government of Hong Kong, the Mainland, or a country where its national regulatory authority is designated by the World Health Organization as a stringent regulatory authority.

An LD spokesman said, "The new measures apply to FDHs who are coming from the new Group A specified places (including the Philippines and Indonesia). If FDHs were fully vaccinated in Hong Kong previously, they will be allowed to board flights for Hong Kong under the new measures. Yet, they must comply with the relevant requirements, including presenting prior to boarding a negative result proof of a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft, and confirmation of a room reservation at a designated quarantine hotel for not less than 21 nights starting on the day of their arrival in Hong Kong. The LD reminds employers and employment agencies (if applicable) to make preparations for their FDHs beforehand. If an FDH is not able to meet any of the relevant requirements, he/she may not be allowed to board a flight for Hong Kong or may be denied entry into Hong Kong upon arrival."

The spokesman continued, "The LD reminds employers that if their FDHs are coming to Hong Kong to commence an employment contract or are returning to Hong Kong after taking a vacation in the place of origin, employers should bear the cost of the nucleic acid test for their FDHs and fulfil their obligations under the Standard Employment Contract, including bearing the accommodation expenses and providing food allowances to FDHs during their compulsory quarantine."

As to FDHs who do not possess a recognised vaccination record, the Government is discussing with the consulates-general of major FDH-sending countries, including the Philippines and Indonesia, on how to verify the

authenticity of their vaccination records so as to enable FDHs who were vaccinated in their home countries to come to work in Hong Kong. In addition, the Government plans to arrange for these FDHs to be centrally quarantined in one to two hotels and is discussing the details. The Government will separately announce the details after confirming the arrangements.