

Persons under compulsory quarantine at designated quarantine hotels must not wear masks with any exhalation valve or vent

â€œTo further prevent the transmission of COVID-19, the Government issued today (November 24) directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) to stipulate that a person under compulsory quarantine at a designated quarantine hotel (DQH) and his or her accompanying carer must not wear a mask with any exhalation valve or vent.

During an earlier investigation of two confirmed cases, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health noted that a person concerned who was under compulsory quarantine at a DQH might have transmitted the virus to others because he was wearing a mask with exhalation valve or vent while his hotel room door was opened.

The CHP strongly advised the public against wearing masks with any exhalation valve or vent as these masks cannot effectively filter droplets in exhaled air. The risk posed to surrounding people will be increased if the wearer is infected with novel coronavirus or other respiratory viruses. To avoid similar situation from recurring, the Government has updated the directions under Cap. 599F to stipulate that a person under compulsory quarantine at a DQH and his or her accompanying carer must not wear a mask with any exhalation valve or vent. The CHP advised that the relevant persons should wear surgical masks properly during check-in or when the hotel room door is opened during the quarantine period in order to effectively prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

The CHP has also updated the relevant infection control guidelines to advise hotel staff and air crew to remind guests and passengers respectively not to use masks with any exhalation valve or vent. The relevant updated guidelines can be downloaded from CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102742.html).