

Phased resumption of public services as epidemic situation stabilises

A Government spokesman announced today (April 28) that, upon the instruction of the Steering Committee cum Command Centre in relation to the COVID-19 virus, the Government will embark on a resumption of public services from May 4 while maintaining a high degree of vigilance and adopting all necessary precautionary measures.

"As the epidemic situation has stabilised since earlier this month with only single digit cases reported over the past two weeks, the Government will resume public services under a phased approach," the spokesman said.

"The first phase will start on May 4, during which public services would resume normal opening hours as far as possible. For example, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will re-open some of its outdoor facilities such as tennis courts and jogging tracks in sports grounds; the Housing Authority will gradually resume flat selections for the Home Ownership Scheme 2019; the Transport Department will resume road tests for driving examinations and the Social Welfare Department will resume normal opening hours of Social Security Field Units and work with NGOs with a view to progressively resuming home-based and community-based services for the elderly and persons with disabilities that have been scaled down or suspended.

"Nevertheless, members of the public are encouraged to continue to use alternative means to receive the services they need (such as on-line applications, by telephone, etc). We will adopt measures at public facilities which will resume opening to the public under the first phase to avoid group gatherings that are in breach of the statutory prohibition against gatherings of more than four persons and to reduce crowds. Bureaux/Departments will announce their latest service arrangements separately."

Resumption of public services under the first phase will be subject to the continuation of social distancing and precautionary measures such as flexible working hours and lunch hours of government employees; video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings where possible; keeping physical distances or using physical partitioning among staff and between staff and clients.

Various infection control measures will also continue to be implemented in government buildings and venues such as body temperature checks at entrances; provision of hand sanitisers, use of sanitising floor mats; enhanced cleansing of public facilities as well as other measures suggested by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health from time to time.

"The Steering Committee cum Command Centre will continue to closely monitor the situation and determine when to embark on a full resumption of normal business under the second phase," said the spokesman.