

Public reminded of health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers from overseas and urged to pay attention to overseas situation of COVID-19 outbreak

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 12) reminded the public that in response to the latest situations of COVID-19, starting from 0.00am on March 14, the DH's Port Health Division officers will issue quarantine orders under the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) to people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to Italy, France (Bourgogne-Franche-Comte and Grand Est), Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia), Japan (Hokkaido) and Spain (La Rioja, Madrid and Pais Vasco) in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents. They will have to stay in a quarantine centre for quarantine.

Meanwhile, the measures for those who have been to Korea and Iran in the past 14 days to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre remain unchanged.

As the World Health Organization declared on March 11 that the global COVID-19 outbreak can be described as a pandemic, it is expected that the number of cases, deaths and countries affected will continue to surge.

The Centre for the Health Protection under the DH has been closely monitoring the global situation, particularly Europe where the outbreak has been rapidly evolving, including Italy (12462 cases), France (2281 cases), Spain (2140 cases) and Germany (1567 cases) (as at 6pm Hong Kong time today). For the situation of other countries/areas, please refer to the [information](#) uploaded onto the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Members of the public should also pay special attention to a number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 related to group tours to India or Egypt that were recently recorded in Hong Kong, indicating the possibility of community transmission there.

A spokesman for the CHP said that in view of proliferation of the disease around the world, members of the public are advised to consider avoiding all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. If it is unavoidable to travel to countries/areas outside Hong Kong, they should put on a surgical mask and continue to do so for 14 days upon their return to Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government will consider the health risk level of countries/areas and timely formulate and update corresponding port health and quarantine measures. Before travelling outside Hong Kong, members of the public should be aware of the potential health risk and applicable

quarantine arrangements upon returning to Hong Kong."

The Government has been conducting detailed assessments for formulating port health measures in response to the occurrence of outbreaks in countries or areas outside Hong Kong. The assessment will take into account factors such as the number, distribution and rate of increase of infected persons, measures put in place for surveillance and control of the outbreak, and the frequency of visits by Hong Kong residents. The Government will review and adjust the measures in view of the developments.

The spokesman urged members of the public who are currently outside Hong Kong, in particular those studying abroad in Europe or America who might now be on term break, to come back to Hong Kong as soon as possible if they have plans to return. They should also pay attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 outbreak in the country where they are in as well as that in neighbouring areas, and consider avoiding non-essential travel.

If it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong, the public should wear a surgical mask and avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. Furthermore, they should observe personal and environmental hygiene and take preventive measures, in particular, avoid touching animals (including game) poultry/birds or their droppings; avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms; and do not consume game meat or patronise food premises where game meat is served.