

Some bank branches temporarily out of service

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

To counter the spread of the novel coronavirus and better protect staff and customers, the banking sector has introduced a series of measures, including split-team arrangements and allowing staff to work from home where practicable.

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (January 31) received reports from banks that, in order to continue operating on this basis, some of their branches will need to be closed or operating hours will need to be shortened temporarily. According to the information provided, around 20-30 per cent of bank branches are expected to be closed temporarily and some of the remaining branches will be open for restricted hours. Individual banks will announce the details of their service arrangements very soon.

Bank customers are advised to use online or phone banking, ATMs and other electronic banking services as far as possible, and to check banks' latest announcements on service arrangements via their websites or customer service hotlines before visiting branches. In addition, the Hong Kong Association of Banks will provide on its website regular updates on the service status of bank branches. The HKMA appeals for the public's understanding of this temporary arrangement, which is necessitated by the current exceptional public health situation.

The HKMA will continue to monitor developments relating to the coronavirus and maintain close contact with the banks. The banks will continue to assess whether any further operational adjustments to bank branch operations are necessary. The HKMA will provide further updates on the availability of banking services when appropriate.