

# Special work arrangements for government employees to be extended

In view of the local epidemic situation, it is necessary for the Government to continue to take measures to reduce the flow of people and social contact in order to stop COVID-19 from spreading in the community. A spokesman for the Government announced today (January 19) that the special work arrangements for government employees will be extended until January 27. Save for those involved in the provision of emergency services and essential public services and in anti-epidemic efforts, all other government employees will be arranged to continue to work from home. The Government will closely monitor the epidemic situation and review the arrangements before January 27.

"The Government appeals to members of the public for their understanding on the inconvenience caused by the reduction in public services in view of the epidemic. However, individual departments, having regard to the latest demand for their services, will make suitable arrangements and announcements separately. The Government's ultimate goal is to resume full public services when conditions permit," the spokesman said.

The spokesman appealed to members of the public, where necessary, to use alternative means, such as post, drop-in boxes or online channels, to receive the services they need. Meanwhile, members of the public should wear surgical masks at all times when they are entering or are present in any government buildings or offices, and comply with the infection control measures implemented by relevant departments including temperature checks, using the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app and crowd control arrangements.

"The Government will take appropriate measures to further safeguard the health and safety of government employees. Starting from January 21, if a staff member is confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, all staff working on the same floor and those who have worked with the staff member concerned (despite not being on the same floor), must undergo COVID-19 testing as soon as possible within a prescribed period. They are also required to work from home until their testing results are confirmed negative. If the testing arrangements concerned affect the provision of public services, the bureaux or departments concerned will make public announcements as soon as possible. Meanwhile, relevant bureaux and departments are making preparations to arrange regular testing for their front-line staff and staff of high-risk work so as to identify asymptomatic patients as soon as possible," the spokesman said.

The spokesman also appealed to employers to allow their staff members to work from home as far as possible according to their operational needs so as to reduce the flow of people and social contact in the community.