

Specifications under Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation to be gazetted

In view of the developments of the COVID-19 epidemic situation worldwide and in Hong Kong, the Government will gazette today (October 27) the latest specifications to include Belgium as a specified place under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) starting from November 3 to more effectively combat the epidemic.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The global epidemic situation is becoming increasingly severe. The daily number of new cases increased from around 70 000 to 100 000 between late March and mid-May, to around 160 000 to 180 000 in late June and to around 220 000 to 290 000 in late July, and further increased to reach a new height of around 340 000 to 460 000 in mid-October. In view of the severe global pandemic situation, Hong Kong cannot afford to drop its guard on entry prevention and control measures."

The Government has earlier introduced Cap. 599H to impose testing and quarantine conditions on travellers coming to Hong Kong from very high-risk places to reduce the health risk they may bring to Hong Kong. The Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) has previously published in the Gazette specifications on the relevant measures applicable to 13 specified places (i.e. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, France, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) and adjusted the relevant conditions having regard to the circumstances on the ground since the implementation of the regulation.

Taking into account the latest public health risk assessment, and the changes and developments of the epidemic situation, the SFH will publish in the Gazette new specifications to maintain the conditions imposed and to include Belgium as specified places with effect from November 3 until further notice.

According to the latest specifications, a traveller who, on the day on which the traveller boarded a civil aviation aircraft that arrives at, or is about to arrive at, Hong Kong (specified aircraft), or during the 14 days before that day, has stayed in one of the aforementioned specified places must provide the following documents:

(1) A test report in English or Chinese issued by a laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name of the relevant traveller identical to that in

his or her valid travel document to show that:

(a) the relevant traveller underwent a nucleic acid test for COVID-19, the sample for which was taken from the relevant traveller within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the specified aircraft;

(b) the test conducted on the sample is a nucleic acid test for COVID-19; and

(c) the result of the test is that the relevant traveller was tested negative for COVID-19; and

(2) If the relevant report is not in English or Chinese or does not contain all of the above information, a written confirmation in English or Chinese issued by the laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name of the relevant traveller identical to that in his or her valid travel document and setting out all of the above information. The said written confirmation should be presented together with the test report; and

(3) Documentary proof in English or Chinese to show that the laboratory or healthcare institution is ISO 15189 accredited or is recognised or approved by the relevant authority of the government of the place in which the laboratory or healthcare institution is located; and

(4) The relevant traveller has confirmation in English or Chinese of room reservation in a hotel in Hong Kong for not less than 14 days starting on the day of the arrival of the relevant traveller in Hong Kong.

The operator of the specified aircraft must submit to the Department of Health (DH) before the specified aircraft arrives at Hong Kong a document in a form specified by the DH confirming that each relevant traveller has, before being checked in for the flight to Hong Kong on the aircraft, produced for boarding on the aircraft the documentary proof to show that the above conditions are met.

If any condition specified by the SFH is not met in relation to any relevant traveller on the conveyance, each of the operators of the conveyance commits an offence and is liable on conviction to the maximum penalty of a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months. If an operator fails to comply with a requirement to provide information, or knowingly or recklessly provides any information that is false or misleading in a material particular, he or she is liable on conviction to the maximum penalty of a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

As for travellers, if a traveller coming to Hong Kong fails to comply with a requirement to provide information, or knowingly or recklessly provides any information that is false or misleading in a material particular, he or she is liable on conviction to the maximum penalty of a fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Travellers to Hong Kong should note that they will be mandated to wait for their test results at a designated location after their deep throat saliva samples are collected for conducting testing for COVID-19 at the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre pursuant to the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599). If their test results are negative, they

will be allowed to go to the hotel for which they made the reservation to continue the 14-day compulsory quarantine until completion. If their results are positive, the travellers will be transferred to hospital for isolation and treatment.

The Government will continue to monitor closely the situation including the developments of the epidemic situation both globally and locally and changes in the volume of cross-boundary passenger traffic, and may adopt more resolute and severe measures as and when necessary.