

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

In view of the development and severity of the COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong, the Government announced today (July 18) that it had gazetted the specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to impose conditions based on public health grounds on travellers who has visited specified high risk places within 14 days before arrival in Hong Kong, in order to further reduce the number of imported cases.

The Government is very concerned about the considerable number of imported cases. New cases recorded during the period from June 20 to July 17 include 234 imported cases.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "As the epidemic situation evolves and develops, taking into account the limited capacities of our quarantine and isolation facilities, the Government needs to implement measures to prevent imported cases. To this end, having regard to the latest public health risk assessment, we consider it necessary to impose conditions on travellers coming to Hong Kong from high risk places to reduce the health risk they may bring to Hong Kong."

Specification by the Secretary for Food and Health

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 any specified place (i.e. Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Africa), must provide the following documents:

(1) a letter or certificate in English or Chinese issued by a laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name and identity card or passport number of the relevant traveller 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;

(2) the original of the report for the test issued by the laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name and identity card or passport number of the relevant traveller;

(3) a letter in English or Chinese issued by the relevant authority of the government of the place in which the laboratory or healthcare institution

is located certifying that the laboratory or healthcare institution is recognised or approved by the government; 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 should 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 above documents.

The relevant specifications will come into effect at 0.00am on July 25, 2020, and will remain effective until further notice. In addition, a person who is in transit in Hong Kong, and a person exempted by the Chief Secretary for Administration from compulsory quarantine under section 4(1) of either the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) or Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) will not be affected.

If any conditions specified by the Secretary for Food and Health 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 development of the epidemic situation both globally and locally and changes in the volume of cross-boundary passenger traffic, and will not hesitate to adopt further measures if necessary.