

# Transcript of remarks by SCS

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, at a media stand-up after the Legislative Council Finance Committee meeting today (February 28):

Reporter: Secretary, when civil servants return to work, will they or will they not be provided with surgical masks or do they have to bring their own? And second question, regarding the increased head count for police officers in the coming Budget, why is it necessary to increase by that much?  
...(inaudible) is not a small number even for such a big force.

Secretary for the Civil Service: Let me take the last question first. All requests for additional manpower have to be based on actual operational needs. And I believe the Police have a strong case to argue and to support their request. And I am sure there will be opportunities for the head of the department and the relevant bureau colleagues to explain the justification to the public. Thank you.

Reporter: And the second question?

Secretary for the Civil Service: Regarding masks, I have to stress that the Government has always been providing masks to those colleagues who are in need. It is of course our priority in doing so to first provide for those who are involved in medical services, and also those who are involved in frontline anti-epidemic efforts. And we will also provide masks for those who are involved in necessary essential services and emergency services.

Reporter: What about other civil servants ...(inaudible)?

Secretary for the Civil Service: I haven't finished. Apart from those categories I have mentioned, we will also provide masks for colleagues who in the course of the duty have to be in frequent close contact with the public, like counter services. And also those who are working in very congested or closed environment with a lot of people around. In fact, concerning the needs of the individuals, the Government understands the concerns of colleagues about the epidemic, about the infection risks. Therefore, under the direction of the steering committee chaired by the Chief Executive, we have promulgated guidelines to relax the procedures for acquiring masks so that individual departments can go and direct purchase masks from the market, so that they can better address the needs of colleagues in their departments. We will continue and I am sure individual departments will continue to adopt this attitude in managing the use of masks for the needy colleagues in their departments.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)