

Update on supplies from Mainland

The Task Force of Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong. In addition to land transport arrangements, transportation of goods by water and railway are already in service.

A spokesperson for the THB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

Currently, there are three water transportation routes between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, namely (1) from Shenzhen Yantian International Container Terminals to Hong Kong Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCT); (2) from Shenzhen DaChan Bay Terminals to KTCT; and (3) from China Merchants Port (South China) Management Center (Shenzhen Mawan, Shekou and Chiwan Container Terminals) to Hong Kong River Trade Terminal and elsewhere. Together with the water transportation routes from other cities in Guangdong Province, including the routes from Guangzhou Lianhuashan Port, Zhongshan Huangpu Port and Zhuhai Doumen Port to Hong Kong Tuen Mun Chu Kong Pier, the water transport capacity amounts to tens of thousands of tonnes daily.

The spokesperson said today (March 23) that around 3 350 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of supplies were transported to Hong Kong from Shenzhen yesterday (March 22), equivalent to about 23 740 tonnes of goods, among which around 20 TEUs (about 200 tonnes) were fresh food and around 3 330 TEUs (about 23 540 tonnes) were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 48 790 TEUs of supplies have been shipped to Hong Kong, equivalent to about 344 690 tonnes of goods, among which around 880 TEUs (about 8 010 tonnes) were fresh food and around 47 910 TEUs (about 336 680 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

As for rail cargo, mainly anti-epidemic supplies are being transported at the moment. Eighteen TEUs with a total of 50 tonnes of goods were transported to Hong Kong yesterday. Since its launch on March 2 and up to yesterday, more than 1 140 tonnes of goods including anti-epidemic supplies such as COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits and protective gowns were transported to Hong Kong.

To further ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong through land transport, a trial run of cargo transfer was conducted by the THB at a yard situated on Kam Pok Road, San Tin, Yuen Long, and it was completed smoothly.

The THB will continue to work with the Mainland authorities to fully take forward cargo transfer arrangements on the Hong Kong side. It is a contingency measure in response to the latest epidemic situation in the city so as to reduce the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong, ensuring both smooth cross-boundary land transport and stable goods supply to Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) has arranged for dedicated staff to conduct RATs for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points (BCPs) from February 28 onwards. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. In order to further improve the accuracy of the tests, the RATs conducted at the BCPs have gradually been replaced with rapid nucleic acid tests starting from March 20. A total of 1 029 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday in which eight drivers preliminarily tested positive. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The THB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, with a view to complementing the supply through land, water and railway transport, thereby enhancing the capacity and efficiency as well as optimising the flow of cross-boundary supplies.