

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

March 25, 2020



SPECIAL NOTICE

Hong Kong Residents in Canada Seeking Assistance

In response to the local government's appeal for concerted efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) has been closed temporarily from March 24 until further notice. Users may continue to reach us via the following channels:

Toronto

Phone: (416) 924-5544 or

Email: info@hketotoronto.gov.hk

Vancouver

Phone: (604) 331-1300 or

Email: info_vancouver@hketotoronto.gov.hk

For urgent assistance outside office hours, Hong Kong residents in Canada may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department in Hong Kong at +852 1868. In the event that Hong Kong residents who need assistance are not able to call the hotline due to the service settings of their telecommunication services operators or other reasons, they may try adding "0000" after entering "1868". Hong Kong residents in Canada in need of consular assistance may contact the Chinese Embassy or Consulate Offices in your province (<http://ca.china-embassy.org/eng/zlgj/>).

RECENT ACTIVITY

HKETO Director visits YSpace and VentureLAB

Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (HKETO), Ms Emily Mo, visited the YSpace and VentureLAB on March 13 to learn about the operation of the innovation and technology hubs in Markham, and explore how HKETO can work with these two organisations to assist startups in the York Region to expand to Hong Kong and beyond.

YSpace is York University's newest community innovation hub that supports high potential innovators to create a thriving and robust pipeline of talent. The VentureLAB is Canada's densest technology cluster which supported over 2 000 entrepreneurs in the York region through programmes that focused on capital, talent, technology and customers.

Hong Kong is the preferred destination for starting and expanding businesses, and the best gateway to opportunities in the Mainland of China and the rest of Asia. HKETO and the two organisations look forward to future collaboration in assisting Canadian startups to expand outside of Canada through the Hong Kong platform.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.hketotoronto.gov.hk/newsroom/hketo-director-visits-yspace-and-venturelab.html>

HONG KONG NEWS

Government announces enhancements to anti-epidemic measures in four aspects

With a large number of Hong Kong residents returning from overseas countries in which the COVID-19 epidemic situation has been increasingly severe recently, the number of imported cases in Hong Kong has surged rapidly and some clusters with community-acquired cases have been detected. After consideration by major members of the Steering Committee cum Command Centre chaired by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mrs Carrie Lam, enhancements were announced on March 23 for the anti-epidemic measures in four aspects, responding quickly to the latest developments of the disease.

The four aspects of the measures are as follows:

(1) Preventing imported cases and cutting the virus transmission chain

To further prevent imported cases and cut the global and local virus transmission chain as far as possible, the following measures have been implemented with effect from 0.00am on March 25, tentatively for 14 days:

- All non-Hong Kong residents coming from overseas countries and regions by plane will be denied entry to Hong Kong;
- Non-Hong Kong residents coming from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan will be denied entry to Hong Kong if they have been to any overseas countries and regions in the past 14 days;
- All transit services at Hong Kong International Airport will be suspended; and
- All travellers coming from Macao and Taiwan, including Hong Kong and non-Hong Kong residents, will be subject to a 14-day compulsory quarantine, which is the same as the arrangements for people entering Hong Kong from the Mainland.

Taking into consideration the practical situation, a small number of persons can be exempted from the above immigration restrictions and/or quarantine requirements, including:

- Macao residents who are registered under the Macao scheme under agreement between the Macao Special Administrative Region Government and the HKSAR Government that they will be immediately taken by coach back to Macao upon entry;
- Crew members of aircraft who need to commute to and from foreign places for performance of necessary duties or crew members of goods vessels;
- Government officials carrying out government duties including personnel of consular posts;
- Spouses and minor children of Hong Kong residents; and

- Personnel engaged in anti-epidemic work endorsed by the HKSAR Government.

The Immigration Department will handle each case in accordance with immigration policy, the actual situation and established procedures.

(2) Early Identification of asymptomatic inbound travellers

The Government will expand its current practice of random virus testing against asymptomatic inbound travellers by mandating that all arriving persons from the United Kingdom, other countries in Europe and the United States must have virus tests with an aim of identifying infected but asymptomatic cases as early as possible. The relevant travellers will be given a specimen container on arrival and will each be required to collect their deep throat saliva sample at a specific time and deliver it to one of the designated clinics as instructed by the Department of Health. If a sample tests positive, the Department of Health will arrange for the person to be admitted to hospital for isolation and treatment immediately. If the test result is negative, the person concerned will still be required to complete the 14-day home quarantine.

(3) Stringent enforcement actions to combat breaches of quarantine orders

The law enforcement agencies will enhance enforcement and strictly combat offenders breaching quarantine orders, including setting up a hotline as soon as possible for members of the public to report such cases to enhance the effectiveness of law enforcement. The HKSAR Government once again reminds all persons under compulsory quarantine to strictly comply with the quarantine order and not to defy the law.

Leaving dwelling places without permission is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum imprisonment for six months and fine of HK\$25,000.

(4) Reducing social contacts and gatherings further

To further reduce social contacts and gatherings, the HKSAR Government will invoke the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599) to introduce legislation to temporarily prohibit the sale and supply of alcoholic drinks by about 8 600 restaurants, bars and clubs with liquor licences in Hong Kong. Details of the relevant legislation will be announced later.

The HKSAR Government will also discuss with members of the restaurant industry on ways to further reduce gatherings (such as wedding banquets and other celebration activities) and how restaurants can reduce customers' risk of infection during meals.

In addition, the HKSAR Government will request the clubs on private recreational leases to immediately close all of their recreational and sports facilities, changing rooms and play rooms for

young children in the clubs. The Government also appeals to other private clubs and gymnasias to adopt the same measure to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/24/P2020032400050.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/24/P2020032400828.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/22/P2020032200761.htm>

Besides, in view of the latest situation, the HKSAR Government will adjust public services and make special work arrangements for civil servants to reduce social contacts. Starting from March 23, all government departments provide essential, emergency and limited public services only. Enterprises are urged to make flexible work arrangements for employees to tie in with the Government strategy to fight the disease. Some of the public facilities that reopened earlier are temporarily closed, including leisure venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, public facilities of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, and community halls and community centres of the Home Affairs Department. Relevant authorities will make separate announcements on arrangements of public services and the opening of public facilities.

To protect students' health, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination scheduled to start on March 27 will be deferred to April 24 and is expected to be finished on May 25, and the speaking examinations of both Chinese and English language subjects will be cancelled. In addition, classes of all schools will remain suspended until further notice.

As the elderly are of higher risk in contracting the disease, the HKSAR Government will help residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities to strengthen disease prevention. The Chief Executive has earlier decided to provide one million surgical masks monthly to these institutions for use by the nursing staff, and that will now be doubled to 2 million monthly. In addition, the Social Welfare Department will arrange the spraying of an anti-bacteria coating developed by an innovation and technology team of a local university in the institutions to strengthen the prevention of the virus.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/22/P2020032200022.htm>

Health quarantine arrangements further extended to inbound travellers from overseas

Following the Security Bureau's announcement on March 17 that in view of the health risks arising from the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases globally, the Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) has been issued on all overseas countries/territories based on public health considerations, the Department of Health (DH) will extend health quarantine arrangements on inbound travellers arriving from all countries/territories accordingly and demand them to undergo compulsory quarantine.

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Starting from 0.00am on March 19, the DH's Port Health Division officers have been issuing quarantine orders for compulsory quarantine to people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to all overseas countries/territories in the past 14 days, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents.

Meanwhile, the quarantine measures announced earlier for people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do in Korea, Iran, and Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy, as well as Hong Kong residents returning from Hubei Province in the past 14 days to stay in a quarantine centre for quarantine remain unchanged. According to the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the measures of issuing quarantine orders to all people entering Hong Kong from the Mainland of China, regardless of whether they are Hong Kong residents, and to demand them to stay at home or other accommodation for a 14-day compulsory quarantine also remain unchanged.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/17/P2020031700754.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/17/P2020031700577.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/24/P2020032400549.htm>

Exemption arrangement under Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation

Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) (the Regulation), made under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Public Health Emergency) Regulation, commenced at 0.00am on March 19.

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration of the HKSAR Government has exempted the following categories of persons from the quarantine requirement with effect from the commencement of the Regulation:

1. crew members of aircrafts who need to commute to and from foreign places for performance of necessary duties;
2. crew members of goods vessels;
3. government officials carrying out governmental duties;
4. Public officers at or above the level of Executive Directors (or equivalent) in the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission and the Insurance Authority undertaking international obligations and/or participating in international co-operation pursuant to their regulatory functions;

5. construction personnel tasked to carry out off-site duties in foreign places that are essential and cannot be replaced by other means to ensure the quality, integrity and statutory compliance of services or components to be used in government projects;
6. experts, personnel of the academic sectors or of international authorities who are engaged in research and/or provide advice in combating the COVID-19 infection to the HKSAR Government;
7. staff and personnel of public bodies and their partners for the supply of wristbands and related materials for home quarantine; and
8. personnel of public bodies and their partners, agencies, companies or organisations for the supply to Hong Kong of personal protective equipment (PPE) or materials/equipment for the production of PPEs.

The DH will arrange medical surveillance for persons under the above exempted categories of persons during their stay in Hong Kong. Persons under medical surveillance are required to wear masks and check temperature daily for reporting to the DH. In addition, exempted persons are also subject to the temperature check and health declaration procedures carried out by the DH at various boundary control points during arrival and departure clearance.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/18/P2020031800812.htm>

Government adopts multi-tech approach to support home quarantine

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Bureau of the HKSAR Government said on March 16 that the Government is adopting a multi-tech approach in home quarantine support. With the electronic wristbands developed by the Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre (LSCM) as a key solution, other technology solutions are also being introduced to complement the current monitoring system in dealing with the evolving epidemic.

The Anti-epidemic Fund has set aside HK\$50 million for home quarantine support with the aid of technology. Until noon March 20, over 7 400 new monitoring wristbands in supporting compulsory quarantine measures were distributed to persons arriving at the Hong Kong International Airport to use in pair with the “StayHomeSafe” mobile app.

The spokesman said that the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer has been in contact with different developers to source other technology solutions that can complement the current monitoring system and enhance the effectiveness of monitoring. Developed by the startup and a local university, the mobile app paired with the electronic wristbands can help analyse the change in communication signals with artificial intelligence and big data to ascertain people under quarantine are staying at their dwelling places.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/16/P2020031600759.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/20/P2020032000645.htm>

Government approves first two production lines under Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau of the HKSAR Government announced on March 20 that it has approved the first two production lines under the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme.

The applicant of the first approved production line is Topwill Passion Limited. The production line is expected to supply an average of 2 million masks to the HKSAR Government every month starting from April 20, and produce a further 250 000 masks for the local market on average every month.

The applicant of the second approved production line is Shang Manufactory Limited. The production line is expected to supply an average of 800 000 masks to the HKSAR Government every month starting from May 5.

Based on their committed production output, the above-mentioned production lines may receive subsidies of up to HK\$2.5 million and HK\$2 million respectively. The actual amount of each subsidy is contingent upon the actual expenditure for production equipment and setting up the venue and clean room facilities, as well as testing and standards compliance, and will be finalised when the expenditure is confirmed.

The Scheme will provide subsidies to a maximum of 20 local production lines. Taking into account the two approved applications, there remains a subsidy quota of 18 production lines.

The HKSAR Government has engaged the Hong Kong Productivity Council to administer the Scheme. Details of the Scheme can be found at the HKPC's website: u.hkpc.org/mask.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/20/P2020032000131.htm>

HKTBT to launch a HK\$400 million trade support plan to reinvigorate tourism

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTBT) announced that a HK\$400 million trade support plan will be launched to strengthen its support for the trade and joint promotions, with an aim to speed up the recovery of Hong Kong tourism.

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The HKTB said that the provisional figure for visitor arrivals to Hong Kong in February was 199,000, down more than 96% from the same time last year. In view of the current development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HKTB expects a further drop in arrivals in March.

The initiatives will cover local and overseas travel agencies, hotels, airlines and attractions, as well as the retail, dining and Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industries. The estimated budget for the plan will be funded by the proposed marketing budget in the 2020/21 financial year and the additional funding earmarked in the Budget.

The plan focuses on the following three areas:

- Boosting domestic spending confidence and ambience
- Partnering with trade to intensify promotions in source markets
- Stepping up MICE promotion to attract high-yield overnight visitors

In 2020/21, the proposed marketing budget, together with the additional funding announced in the Budget for the HKTB, is about HK\$1,120 million. The HKTB will closely monitor the latest market developments to ensure timely implementation of the initiatives and adjust its resource allocation if needed.

Click the following link for details.

https://partnet.hktb.com/filemanager/intranet/pm/PressRelease/EnglishPress/Press%20Release%202020/03-Feb-arrivals-E_final.pdf

Hong Kong rated as world's second freest economy

Hong Kong was ranked number two in the 2020 Index of Economic Freedom, published by the Heritage Foundation (the Foundation). Hong Kong attained high scores of 90 or above in seven out of 12 components adopted for measuring economic freedom, though Hong Kong's overall score decreased by 1.1 points from the previous year due primarily to a decline in the "Investment Freedom" score, which was mainly due to security issues arising from the social unrest in the latter half of 2019.

A HKSAR Government spokesperson said on March 17 that Hong Kong welcomes the Foundation's continued recognition of Hong Kong's various strengths and its awareness that the territory remains a dynamic global financial centre with a high degree of competitiveness and openness. It is gratifying to note that Hong Kong attained the highest score among the assessed economies in terms of "Fiscal Health", "Business Freedom", "Trade Freedom" and "Financial Freedom".

The spokesperson stressed that Hong Kong's institutional strengths are unscathed and its underlying fundamentals remain strong. It is relevant to note that Hong Kong's scores in the three

components relating to the rule of law – “Property Rights”, “Judicial Effectiveness” and “Government Integrity” - have all increased in the 2020 Index of Economic Freedom. Investors continue to have confidence in our long-term economic prospects, especially given Hong Kong’s platform role for international investors to access the Mainland market.

The 2020 Index of Economic Freedom report was released by the Foundation on March 17, 2020, analysing the level of economic freedom of 180 economies. Hong Kong was ranked second in the Index with an overall score of 89.1 (out of 100), which was well above the global average of 61.6.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202003/17/P2020031700546.htm>

Updates on Novel Coronavirus Infection in Hong Kong

The Government of the HKSAR has implemented a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus and protect the health of the community while maintaining Hong Kong’s position as an international city and aviation hub.

An information page “Latest Situation of Novel Coronavirus Infection in Hong Kong” has been added to the official website of HKETO. Information in the page includes the latest local situation, reported cases, health tips, travel advice etc.

You are invited to browse the page by clicking the banner on top of HKETO website or the following link:

<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

In addition, the Government of the HKSAR have been promoting on social distancing. Please visit the video link below for advice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvyLWmYiom8&list=PLEF79D510039674EB&index=13>

Recruitment of qualified doctors outside Hong Kong

DH in Hong Kong is recruiting qualified doctors outside Hong Kong for the positions of Non-civil Service Contract Doctor (without Full Registration) and Contract Doctor (without Full Registration) (Child Assessment). Applications for the above two posts are accepted all year round. Eligibility requirements are set out in the attached recruitment notices of the Department of Health.

Enquiries can be made to the Department of Health at appts_registry1@dh.gov.hk and online application can be made through the Civil Service Bureau's website at <http://www.csb.gov.hk>. Job numbers are 40221 (Contract Doctor (without Full Registration)) and 40248 (Contract Doctor (without Full Registration) (Child Assessment)).

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Click the following links for details.

[Click here to read the details of Contract Doctor \(without full registration\)](#)

[Click here to read the details of Contract Doctor \(without full registration \(Child Assessment\)\)](#)

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HKETO Toronto Twitter Page <https://twitter.com/TorontoHKETO>

Brand Hong Kong Facebook page www.facebook.com/brandhk.isd or

Brand Hong Kong Instagram page www.instagram.com/brandhongkong/

Brand Hong Kong Twitter page https://twitter.com/Brand_HK

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