



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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7 April 2020

Clerk to Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms. Maisie LAM)

Dear Ms LAM,

Panel on Health Services
Letter from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Thank you for your letter of 26 March 2020 addressed to the Secretary for Food and Health. Our response to the questions raised by Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki is at **Annex**.

Yours sincerely,

(Lilian TSE)

for Secretary for Food and Health

Encl.

c.c.

Secretary for Food and Health's Office

(Attn.: Mrs Winnie KANG)

(Attn.: Mr Kelvin CHENG)

Food and Health Bureau

(Attn.: Mr Ronald HO)

Department of Health

(Attn.: Dr KH WONG)

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

(Attn.: Miss Eileen YUE)

**Government's Response on the Measures for
the Prevention and Control of Novel Coronavirus in Hong Kong**

Personal protective equipment for healthcare personnel:

On 23 March 2020, the Department of Health (“DH”) received notification that a doctor of the Port Health Division of DH stationed at the Hong Kong International Airport had been diagnosed with the coronavirus disease-2019 (“COVID-19”). DH has been deeply concerned about the case and commenced epidemiological investigation and contact tracing immediately. While the investigation is ongoing, thorough disinfection of the relevant facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport has been conducted and the regular disinfection of the concerned office stepped up. Infection control advice has also been provided to the staff of the office concerned. All staff have been asked to wear surgical mask inside the office and reminded to practise good personal hygiene at all times.

2. DH has issued guidelines on the minimum requirements of personal protective equipment (“PPE”) for different duties of staff working in the current COVID-19 pandemic, and training has been provided on infection control practices. When choosing the appropriate PPE, staff members should make a rational choice based on the relevant risk assessment. If a staff member has concerns, he/she can discuss with his/her supervisors. In general, staff members responsible for handling enquiries from asymptomatic travellers and performing quarantine-related duties are advised to wear a surgical mask and eye protection. Under situations where a staff member’s clothes or hands may potentially be exposed to a contaminated environment or respiratory secretions from travellers, other PPE such as gowns and gloves would need to be used.

3. With the rapid development of the outbreak, the demand for PPE has surged drastically around the globe and the Government faces fierce competition in procurement. The Government considers it not opportune at this stage to disclose the PPE stock level of individual departments to avoid affecting the bargaining power of the Government Logistics Department and individual departments in procuring PPE. That said, the Government would ensure that sufficient PPE would be provided to healthcare workers and front-line workers continuously.

Exemption of compulsory quarantine requirement:

4. The top priority of the Government at present is to prevent and control the outbreak of COVID-19, of which the compulsory quarantine measure is an integral part. The Government must ensure, at the same time, the normal operation of the community, including the transportation of daily necessities of the public from the Mainland as usual.

5. Under section 4(1) of the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Chief Secretary for Administration may exempt any person or category of persons from complying with the compulsory quarantine requirement if he is satisfied that the person's or persons' entry into Hong Kong meets the criterion of "necessary for the supply of goods or services required for the normal operation of Hong Kong or the daily needs of the people of Hong Kong" or other criteria¹.

6. In accordance with section 4(1) of the above Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration has exempted the following category of persons from the compulsory quarantine requirement -

- (a) *Either the owner of a company with factory/factories in the Mainland which are engaged in manufacturing goods for supply to Hong Kong for its normal operation or for the daily needs of the people of Hong Kong, and up to one personnel employed and so authorised by the company; or*
- (b) *Up to two personnel employed and so authorised by such a company as described in (a).*

7. An application for exemption may only be approved if it meets the criterion of manufacturing goods (e.g. food products, medical supplies, personal hygiene supplies, etc.) for supply to Hong Kong for its normal operation or for the daily needs of the people of Hong Kong. This exemption aims to provide an orderly application arrangement for persons maintaining the normal operation of Hong Kong amid the epidemic.

8. For prevention and control of the outbreak, a person who is exempted based on the above criterion must fulfill certain requirements, including he/she must only travel to and stay in the city in which the Mainland factory of his/her company is located for supporting the operation and business of the Mainland factory. An exempted person must take every precautionary measure to ensure

¹The remaining three criteria are that the person's or persons' entry into Hong Kong –

- (i) is necessary for governmental operation;
- (ii) is necessary for the protection of the safety or health of the people of Hong Kong or the handling of the public health emergency; or
- (iii) otherwise serves the public interest of Hong Kong because of the exceptional circumstances of the case.

personal hygiene and avoid unnecessary social contact whilst in the Mainland. After returning to Hong Kong, the exempted person will be subject to medical surveillance arranged by DH during his/her stay in Hong Kong. He/she is required to wear masks and check body temperature daily, as well as to report to DH on any discomfort.

9. As at 3 April 2020, the Trade and Industry Department had approved the applications from 16 manufacturers. The approved applications are related to the manufacturing of hospital equipment, medical supplies, hygiene supplies, food products or liquefied petroleum gas.