



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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Ms Peggy CHUNG
Council Secretary
Council Business Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms CHUNG,

**Subcommittee on Subsidiary Legislation
Relating to the Prevention and Control of Disease**

**Follow-up action required of the Administration
arising from the discussion at the meeting on 5 March 2021**

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2021 on the captioned matter. Our reply is set out below –

(a) applicability of Cap. 599C and Cap. 599E to persons on domestic cruise ships which have travelled into international waters

The current epidemic situation does not permit domestic cruises to resume operation. As regards the question on the applicability of the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) and the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599E) to persons on domestic cruise ships when such cruise operations may resume, under the regulations, the quarantine requirement is applicable to a person who arrives at Hong Kong from a place in China other than Hong Kong or from a place outside China if the person has stayed in a Category 1 or Category 2 place specified by Secretary for Food and Health under Cap. 599C or Cap. 599E.

Currently, a person who travelled on an aeroplane or on a ship having entered the space over or waters of a place, without stopping over and leaving the conveyance or boarding on another conveyance there, will not be regarded as having stayed in such a place for the purpose of deciding if the person has stayed in any Category 1 or Category 2 specified place under Cap. 599C or Cap. 599E or has to be quarantined under the respective regulations.

Following the above, high seas are a place not intended to be a Category 1 or Category 2 place specified under Cap. 599C or Cap. 599E and a person who has merely travelled on the high seas after departing Hong Kong may be regarded as not having stayed in any Category 1 or Category 2 place specified under Cap. 599C or Cap. 599E and hence not subject to any quarantine requirement under section 3 of Cap. 599C or Cap. 599E.

(b) the number of usage (by industry) of the testing services at the Community Testing Centres

The 19 community testing centres (CTCs) across the territory provide self-paid testing services to the public for general community or private purposes (such as certification for travelling or work); and free testing services for persons subject to compulsory testing or targeted groups requiring testing. From 15 November 2020 (commencement date of first four CTCs) to 5 March 2021, more than 540 000 persons were provided with self-paid testing service at CTCs, of which 639 samples tested preliminarily positive (0.12 per cent).

Starting from December 2020, the Government has been gradually providing free voluntary testing service at CTCs for various targeted groups based on the latest epidemic risk assessment to encourage them to actively participate in testing to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers. Starting from mid-February 2021, the Government also provides free testing service to relevant targeted groups at CTCs to tie in with testing arrangements under the relaxation of restrictions on the operation of catering business premises and the re-opening of specified scheduled premises, resumption of face-to-face classes at schools, etc. as part of our efforts to step up epidemic control. As at 5 March, over 33 000 free tests were provided to foreign domestic helpers, around 1 300 tests to couriers (including takeaway food couriers), around 270 000 to construction site workers, around 14 000 to security and guarding personnel, around 8 000 to teachers and staff of schools, around 66 000 to staff of scheduled premises and around 200 000 to staff of catering business premises at CTCs.

(c) and (d) medical testing institutions which have been recognised and engaged by the Administration for conducting COVID-19 tests and details of the External Quality Assessment Programmes (EQAP) for monitoring the quality of medical testing

The number of private laboratories on Department of Health's (DH) list of "Local COVID-19 nucleic acid testing institutions recognised by the Hong Kong SAR Government" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories.pdf) has increased from 15 as of July 2020 to 23 at present. All these laboratories have met DH's criteria for the Laboratory Recognition Scheme for SARS-CoV-2 Testing (LRS),

including having attained certification of SARS-CoV-2 Quality Assurance Programme (QAP) from the Centre for Health Protection, and attained medical laboratory accreditation from the College of American Pathologists, Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS) or its Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) partners. According to our record, 11 accredited laboratories have provided testing services to various Government departments. Generally speaking, the procurement process of testing services is open for participation by all qualified testing institutions.

As private laboratories have accumulated sufficient experience on SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test over the last year, to gradually enhance the quality of the services provided by private laboratories, DH has requested that SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test must be included in the scope of accreditation for new applicants to LRS since 1 January 2021. For existing private laboratories under LRS, their scope of accreditation must cover SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test by 31 December 2021, otherwise they may be disenrolled from DH's list of recognised laboratories.

(e) setting up of Community Vaccination Centres

The Government will set up 29 Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) in Hong Kong to provide COVID-19 vaccination services for citizens. As at 10 March, 15 CVCs have commenced operations.

To mobilise sufficient medical manpower to support the smooth operations of the CVCs, the Government has partnered with the Hospital Authority and a number of healthcare professional bodies, medical organisations and private hospitals (collectively as "partner healthcare organisations") to take charge of the medical-related tasks at the CVCs. The partner healthcare organisations participating in the operation of the CVCs must be of a certain scale with medical network, ability to mobilise staff as well as resources. The Government had earlier issued invitations to 40-plus healthcare organisations which meet the aforesaid criteria (not including public medical organisations) and chose the partner healthcare organisations out of the 17 proposals received. The Government will continuously monitor the implementation of the vaccination programme and make adjustments as necessary.

Yours sincerely,



(Sophia HUI)

for Secretary for Food and Health