



OVERVIEW

The anti-epidemic strategy and objective of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government has been premised on the overall interest of the Hong Kong community, including considering the aspirations of members of the public and the impact on the economy. In pursuit of “dynamic zero infection”, Hong Kong has been strictly implementing the strategy of “preventing the importation of cases and the spread of the virus in the community” and striving to contain the virus by a multi-pronged approach so as to achieve “early identification, early isolation and early treatment” of the infected.

The Central Authorities have provided Hong Kong with ceaseless support in its fight against the fifth wave of the epidemic. With strong backing and unwavering support from the Central Government, the SAR Government will steadfastly act in accordance with the important instruction of President Xi Jinping: assume the primary responsibility to stabilise the epidemic situation early and treat this as the overriding mission at present; mobilise all available manpower and resources and adopt all necessary measures to safeguard the lives and health of Hong Kong people and the stability of society.

The HKSAR Government will continue to fully implement the strategy of reducing critical cases, deaths and infections. A multi-tiered triage and treatment strategy will be strengthened to provide appropriate support for patients, especially the elderly, having regard to the severity of their medical conditions. The vaccination rates of the elderly and children will also be boosted. It will continue to closely monitor the epidemic development, review it with experts, and tap views from society at large, in order to formulate more targeted anti-epidemic measures in future.

ANTI-EPIDEMIC STRATEGY



1. CONTAIN AND CONTROL

2. EARLY TESTING AND DETECTION

3. PREVENTING IMPORTED CASES

4. TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

1. CONTAIN AND CONTROL

EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

On **January 4, 2020**, the Government activated the “**Serious Response Level**” for the “Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance” (Preparedness and Response Plan).

On **January 6, 2020**, a **Steering Committee** was formed under the Preparedness and Response Plan.

On **January 8, 2020**, COVID-19 was included in the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance.

On **January 23, 2020**, the **first quarantine centre was activated**, immediately after the first two confirmed cases of infection in Hong Kong were identified.

On **January 25, 2020**, the Government activated the “**Emergency Response Level**” of the Preparedness and Response Plan.

The Chief Executive chairs the **Steering Committee-Command Centre** to oversee concerted efforts to fight the disease. First meeting held on January 26, 2020.

The Chief Executive set up an **expert advisory panel**, comprising three world-renowned experts, to advise the Government in a direct and timely manner.

At an internal high-level meeting on **February 13, 2022**, the Chief Executive appointed the convenors from the Government for five task forces, who will co-ordinate with the representatives of the relevant ministries and commissions of the Central Authorities, as well as the Guangdong Provincial Government, to press ahead with the implementation work to tackle the aggravating situation of the fifth wave of the epidemic in Hong Kong.

Enacted the Emergency (Exemption from Statutory Requirements) (COVID-19) Regulation to allow the Government to exempt certain persons or projects from all relevant statutory requirements in respect of licensing, registration and application, etc such that the Government may draw on Mainland's support and resources in a flexible and prompt manner to undertake key anti-epidemic projects at full speed when necessary. The Regulation has come into operation on February 24, 2022.

The Government has provided financial assistance to individuals and business affected by the pandemic via the counter-cyclical measures in the previous two Budgets and the Anti-Epidemic Fund (AEF), involving a total of over \$460 billion (about US\$59 billion). The 2022-23 Budget announced counter-cyclical measures to relieve people's hardship, committing a total funding of over \$170 billion (about US\$21.8 billion), and allocate substantial additional resources to step up anti-epidemic efforts.

PROMOTING “SOCIAL DISTANCING”

Kindergartens/kindergarten-cum-child care centres, primary, secondary and special schools (excluding private schools offering non-local curriculum including international schools) have started special vacation not later than March 17, 2022 and will resume face-to-face classes in stages on April 19 at the earliest. Private schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") will continue the suspension of face-to-face classes and on-campus activities until April 18, 2022.

Government departments will continue to adopt targeted social distancing and infection control measures, and resume public services gradually from April 1 with a view to largely resuming normal public services from April 21. The government appeals to all employers to continue to allow their staff members to work from home as far as possible to drastically reduce the flow of people and social contact in the community, and to resume normal operation in a gradual, timely and orderly manner in accordance with the announced timeline for a phased relaxation of most of the social distancing measures, and the modes of operation and actual situations of their respective sectors.

Until April 20, 2022, social distancing [measures](#) as follows:

- **Mandatory mask-wearing** in all public places (including country parks), when boarding or on board a public transport carrier and in MTR paid areas
- **Group gatherings** of not more than 2 persons in public places unless exempted, and **multi-household gatherings** of not more than 2 households at **private premises**
- Customers or users of all catering business premises and scheduled premises must use the “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile application (except persons aged 65 or above and aged 15 or below; persons with disability; and other persons recognised by the Government or organisations authorised by the Government)
- For **catering premises**, dine-in services are not allowed from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day. No live performance and dancing activity is allowed. Karaoke or mahjong-tin kau activity should also be suspended therein. The maximum number of persons per table is two, and no banquet is allowed.
- Bars or pubs, amusement game centres, bathhouses, fitness centres, places of amusement, places of public entertainment, party rooms, beauty parlours, massage establishments, clubs or nightclubs, karaoke establishments, mahjong-tin kau premises, sports premises, swimming pools, cruise ships, event premises and religious premises (except for funerals) are closed
- Barber shops or hair salons should full implement “Vaccine Pass” requirements and customers must use “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile application
- **Club-houses, hotels, guesthouses, shopping malls, department stores, supermarkets and markets** must comply with the relevant infection control requirements and restrictions for operation
- All local tours are suspended.

On the condition that the epidemic situation shows no signs of rebound and continues the downward trend, most social distancing measures can be relaxed from April 21 onwards in three phases over a period of three months, whereas the basic measures, including use of “LeaveHomeSafe” and “Vaccine Pass” upon entering premises; cleansing and disinfection at premises; restriction on the maximum number of persons per group gathering in a public place and wearing of masks, must continue to be observed.

The Chief Executive Election has been postponed to May 8, 2022

COVID-19 VACCINATION

The Government provides the public with the Comirnaty vaccine manufactured by BioNTech and the Sinovac vaccine. Both vaccines are safe and highly effective in protecting against severe disease and death from COVID-19 infection.

The Government has made a regulation to provide the legal framework for bringing in vaccines that satisfy the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality for emergency use, and set up an indemnity fund to provide support for members of the public who encounter a rare or unpredicted severe adverse event associated with the administration of the vaccine. An expert committee has also been set up to continuously monitor the possible adverse event following administration of the vaccines, and provide professional views and suggestions on safety monitoring of the authorised vaccines.

Hong Kong residents and eligible non-Hong Kong residents can receive vaccinations free of charge. The minimum age for receiving the Sinovac vaccine and BioNTech vaccine is three and five respectively. All [eligible persons](#) who have already received two doses of vaccines can receive a third dose. Immunocompromised individuals aged 12 or above with the third dose received three months ago can receive a fourth dose.

COVID-19 vaccination is provided to the public in a number of venues, including more than 20 community vaccination centres (CVCs), 4 children CVCs, 13 public hospitals, 41 venues operated by private healthcare institutions, 8 GOPCs of the Hospital Authority (HA), 11 Elderly Health Centres, 19 Maternal and Child Health Centres and 5 Student Health Service Centres under the Department of Health, 2 District Health Centres and 4 Mobile Vaccination Stations and over 1,000 private clinics; the Government will also arrange outreach teams to vaccinate people in need.

Over 15,127,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines administered since the implementation of the vaccination scheme on February 26, 2021.

The Government endeavours to boost the second dose vaccination rate to 90 per cent and boost the first dose vaccination rate to 90 per cent for children aged 3 to 11, teenagers, the elderly aged 70 or above and residents of residential care homes by the end of April, 2022. The Government will closely monitor the situation of vaccination and pay particular attention to assisting the old and the young to speed up their pace of vaccination.

Implements “[Vaccine Pass](#)” arrangement, requiring all persons (unless exempted) who enter or are present at catering premises and specified scheduled premises to receive at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccination requirements of the Vaccine Pass will be implemented in three stages, with stage one commenced, stage two (two doses received) to take effect from April 30 and stage three (three doses received) to be effective from May 31.

The Government has launched a [designated website](#) to provide information about the vaccines and vaccination on a one-stop basis. The website will be linked to the online booking system for Hong Kong residents.

ENHANCED QUARANTINE ARRANGEMENTS AND ISOLATION AND TREATMENT FACILITIES

The Government arranges for patients’ admission to community isolation facilities (CIFs) or hospitals according to their health conditions, living environment, their household family members and other factors, and renders special assistance to those citizens still at home pending admission to isolation facilities or undergoing home isolation. These include anti-epidemic supplies bags, hotline for health enquiries, designated clinics for consultations by booking and transport services by designated fleets.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Fung Yiu King Hospital have been converted to designated hospitals for COVID-19 patients, with a total of around 1,600 beds being utilised to admit COVID-19 patients; Tin Shui Wai Hospital and North Lantau Hospital utilise all their entire beds, totalling about 460 beds, to receive COVID-19 patients.

The **North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre** near AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE) provides negative pressure wards with 816 beds; the community treatment facility at AWE provides 1,450 beds, including 20 negative pressure cubicles, with the HA collaborating with Mainland medical support team to provide treatment for the patients .

The HA has activated 23 **designated clinics** for confirmed cases of COVID-19.

To enhance Hong Kong's treatment capability, the Central Government has assigned a Mainland construction team to build **a hospital for contingency use** in the Lok Ma Chau Loop area.

The Social Welfare Department has set up 7 **holding centres** to admit residents from residential care homes for the elderly who are tested positive for COVID-19 but showing mild symptoms and assessed by relevant departments, as well as recovering elderly who are assessed and referred by the HA as suitable for admission.

The Government is pressing ahead at full steam to provide more community isolation facilities. In addition to the existing isolation facilities at Penny's Bay and Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village, extra community isolation and treatment facilities which will come into operation in phases include those from three converted unoccupied buildings in the public housing estates and two sizeable transitional housing projects, rented commercial hotels as well as those constructed at eight sites and in the Lok Ma Chau Loop area. It is expected that a total of over 70,000 units or beds will be provided.

Six CIFs constructed with the Mainland's support have commenced operation, providing a total of 20,000 beds.

People who are **close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases**, but are asymptomatic, will be **placed under compulsory quarantine** at quarantine centres. "**StayHomeSafe**" Scheme was launched to arrange close contacts and household contacts of close contacts who are deemed appropriate after assessment to undergo home quarantine for 14 days and four days respectively.

A locally developed **smart bracelet** connected to the user's smartphone will be used to ensure people comply with quarantine requirements.

About 220 units in 2 operating quarantine centres.

Temporary accommodation facility at Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centre for Hong Kong residents under compulsory quarantine who are unable to arrange accommodation.

In view of the latest epidemic development and risk assessment, infected persons who have been sent to CIFs and persons pending admission may conduct rapid antigen tests (RATs) on Day 6 and Day 7 after tested positive if they have received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Similarly, close contacts who have received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccines may conduct RATs on Day 6 and Day 7 of the home quarantine period. If they obtain negative test results during RATs on these two successive days, they may leave CIF or home premises earlier on Day 7; if they obtain at least one positive test result during RATs on these two successive days, they may subsequently conduct RATs on a daily basis. They may immediately leave CIF or home premises for their daily activities after they obtain negative test results for two successive days.

2. EARLY TESTING AND DETECTION



The Government follows the three key principles of “**compulsory testing on a mandatory basis, targeted testing on an obligatory basis and testing on a voluntary basis**” to conduct large-scale COVID-19 testing for groups of different risks with a view to achieving “early identification, early isolation and early treatment”, and cutting the transmission chains in the community as far as possible.

The Government provides convenient testing services to the public through various channels, including a free testing service, and encouraging them to make good use of various means such as CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located in various districts for testing. The Government has also distributed more RAT kits for wider use in the community.

From **March 9, 2020**, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) extended the **Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme**, which provides free virus testing service, to cover all private clinics and hospitals so that cases of COVID-19 can be identified early in order to minimise the risk of community transmission. GOPCs and 17 Accident and Emergency Departments under the HA are covered by the Programme.

Public hospitals will conduct COVID-19 testing for inpatients.

Individuals who perceive themselves to have a higher risk of exposure and who do not experience any symptoms can obtain specimen collection packs free of charge for testing at 33 HA GOPCs, all post offices or vending machines at 20 MTR stations.

Since mid-July 2020, testing for **high-risk groups** has been provided through the **Targeted Group Testing Scheme**. Testing is also arranged on a regular basis or by random sampling for certain targeted groups depending on risk assessment and anti-epidemic needs.

Nineteen community testing centres across the territory were set up to provide self-paid testing services at a price capped at \$240 to the general community. The Government will conduct testing for the public at the testing centres for public health reasons when necessary.

Certain categories of persons will be required to undergo **compulsory COVID-19 testing** under relevant regulation. Specified medical practitioners under the regulation can also require symptomatic patients to undergo testing.

According to the needs of infection control, the Government may restrict movement of persons subject to compulsory testing, or seal off premises with epidemic outbreaks until all persons on the premises have undergone testing and the test results are ascertained by making a “**restriction-testing declaration**”. The declaration will cover a period of at most 7 days.

The Department of Health launched the "[Declaration System for individuals tested positive for COVID-19 using Rapid Antigen Test](#)" for people to register RAT positive results to enable speedier assistance to people tested positive.

A [website](#) has been set up to facilitate members of the public to download their own electronic COVID-19 testing records from the test services provided by the Department of Health, the HA and community testing centres. Members of the public may also store their electronic testing records in the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app for easy display of the records when necessary.

3. PREVENTING IMPORTED CASES

From February 4, 2020, the Government **closed all but two land boundary control points** (Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) with the Mainland to stem the flow of cross-boundary travel. **All ferry services** to and from the **Mainland** and **Macao were suspended**. Entry points at **Shenzhen Bay, HZMB** as well as **Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA)** **remain open** with customs and health monitoring resources concentrated at these entry points.

Immigration services at Ocean Terminal is suspended.

From April 1, Hong Kong residents who have stayed in any overseas places in the previous 14 days can only board a flight for Hong Kong if they (i) are fully vaccinated and hold a recognised vaccination record; (ii) hold a negative result proof of a polymerase chain reaction -based nucleic acid test (PCR test) for COVID-19 conducted with specimen collected within 48 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft, and (iii) hold a confirmation of room reservation in a designated quarantine hotel (DQH) for seven or 14 nights from the day of arrival at Hong Kong (depending on whether they could meet the relevant conditions and choose early discharge from compulsory quarantine as per local isolation and quarantine arrangements). Non-Hong Kong residents will not be allowed to board flights for Hong Kong from any overseas places.

They will be subject to the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the HKIA. Upon tested negative with a PCR test, they will be taken to DQHs by designated transport to undergo compulsory quarantine. They are subject to daily RATs, as well as PCR tests on the fifth and 12th days of arrival at Hong Kong. If the results of the PCR test conducted on the fifth day and the RATs conducted on the sixth and seventh days are all negative, they can be discharged from compulsory quarantine earlier but will be required to undergo self-monitoring for seven days, and undergo a compulsory PCR test on the 12th day of arrival at Hong Kong.

The Government will lift the place-specific flight suspension mechanism for Australia, Canada, France, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States from April 1. Hong Kong residents who have stayed in these nine places will be allowed to board flights for Hong Kong.

The route-specific flight suspension mechanism would continue to be applicable. Passenger flights of the concerned route from the relevant airline from the same origin place will be prohibited from landing in Hong Kong for seven days.

From April 1, persons who have only stayed in places in the Mainland or Macao on the day of boarding for/arrival at Hong Kong and during the 14 days before that day are required to present negative result proof of a PCR test within 3 days prior to arrival if they arrive via airport. Not fully vaccinated persons have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 14 days at designated places and 2 tests during quarantine. Those who are fully vaccinated are subject to compulsory quarantine at designated places for 7 days, followed by 7 days of self-monitoring, and have to undergo 2 times of compulsory testing.

From April 1, persons who have stayed in Taiwan on the day of boarding for/arrival at Hong Kong and during the 14 days before that day are required to present a negative result proof of [a PCR test within 48 hours](#) prior to boarding a flight for Hong Kong, subject to compulsory quarantine in DQHs for 14 days and daily RATs, as well as PCR tests on

the fifth and 12th days of arrival at Hong Kong. For fully vaccinated persons, if the results of the PCR test conducted on the fifth day and the RATs conducted on the sixth and seventh days are all negative, they can be discharged from compulsory quarantine earlier but will be required to undergo self-monitoring for seven days, and a compulsory PCR test on the 12th day.

Hong Kong residents returning from the Mainland or Macao upon fulfilment of specified conditions, including not having been to places outside Hong Kong, the Mainland or Macao, and places in the list of at-risk places of the Return2hk / Come2hk Scheme in the past 14 days, holding a negative nucleic acid test result, etc., could be exempted from compulsory quarantine under the [Return2HK Scheme](#).

Non-Hong Kong residents in Guangdong Province or Macao upon fulfilment of specified conditions, including not having been to places outside Hong Kong, Guangdong Province or Macao, and places in listed of at-risk places of the Return2hk / Come2hk Scheme in the past 14 days, holding a negative nucleic acid results, etc., could be exempted from compulsory quarantine under the [Come2hk Scheme](#).

To facilitate quarantine-free travel between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in future, the [Hong Kong Health Code](#) system has been open for public registration.

Crew change arrangement for all passenger vessels and goods vessels without cargo operation **suspended** since July 29, 2020.

Quarantine exemption arrangements have been comprehensively tightened, including cancelling most exemption categories and requiring consular and diplomatic officers to undergo self-isolation at designated quarantine hotels.

4. TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

Daily briefings are held to update the media and the public on latest situation and measures

Dedicated [website](#) with useful information and updates on latest developments

Publicity campaigns to disseminate personal hygiene messages through online and offline media are run in a number of ethnic minority languages apart from English and Chinese.

[“Tamar Talk” Facebook page](#) provides information and clarifies rumours

The Radio Television Hong Kong supports the dissemination of up-to-date anti-epidemic-related information to the community through its television and radio channels and websites.

USEFUL LINKS

[Website on the Fight Against the Coronavirus](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccination Programme designated website](#)

[CHP's geospatial dashboard on COVID-19](#)

[BrandHK COVID-19 Update Page](#)

[Hospital Authority Patient Designated Website – Walk with Us – Combat COVID - 19](#)

[WHO Coronavirus website](#)

[University of Hong Kong dashboard on COVID-19 \(with real-time effective reproductive number\)](#)

March 31, 2022