HONG KONG MONETARY AUTHORITY
香 港 金 融 管 理 局

Circulars

02 Apr 2003

# Precautionary measures relating to Atypical Pneumonia

Our Ref: B1/15C
B9/29C

2 April 2003

The Chief Executive
All Authorized Institutions

Dear Sir / Madam,

## Precautionary measures relating to Atypical Pneumonia

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority ("HKMA") has been in touch with authorized institutions since the outbreak of Atypical Pneumonia ("AP") to understand the contingency measures taken by individual institutions to deal with the situation. The major objective of these measures is to ensure that an institution will be in a position to continue with its operations in case individual staff members are infected. In this connection, I am writing to share with you the measures generally adopted by authorized institutions. You may find these measures useful to your institution in refining its contingency measures.

1. Many institutions have already activated their business continuity plans and established a command centre to monitor the situation. All the departments and branches are required to report confirmed or suspected cases of infection to the command centre, which will then decide on the actions to be taken to deal with the situation. Typically, this involves the release of staff members, who are sitting close to, or have frequent contact with, the infected, for 7 to 10 days. The office concerned will then be fully cleansed and disinfected.
2. As a precautionary measure, many institutions have identified a small team of skeleton staff in each of their critical operational areas such as the dealing room, settlement section and computer department, and send such staff to work in an alternative location such as another branch or at the back-up site. In some cases, a small number of staff is required to work either from home where the situation permits or in a different shift. The idea behind these initiatives is to make sure that there will be a team of staff outside the office that will be able to continue with the operations of the area concerned in case any staff members of that area is infected.
3. For dealing room activities, some institutions have made arrangements with their overseas branches to cover at least part of the activities of the Hong Kong operations in case of need.

4. Some institutions have reduced the number of overseas trips and meetings to reduce the chance of being infected.
5. Institutions have generally reviewed their business continuity plans to make sure that the plans can cope with the problems arising from AP and the contact numbers of staff and major external parties remain up-to-date. Many have carried out testing of their back-up equipment, systems and data to ensure that the business continuity plan can be activated immediately when there is a need to do so. Staff have also been reminded to familiarise themselves with the procedures and arrangements.
6. Office premises are cleansed and disinfected more regularly to maintain a high level of hygiene to prevent AP from spreading. Face masks and hand gloves are also made available to staff members.
7. For operations which have been outsourced, to request the service provider to ensure that its contingency plan can be activated at any time.

I hope that the above will be useful to you in refining the contingency measures of your institution. As a responsible organisation, each institution must ensure that it has a plan to handle the situation in case any of its staff members is infected or suspected to have been infected. Your institution is requested to report to its usual contact at the HKMA in case any of its staff members is unfortunately infected or suspected to have been infected with the disease.

If you have any questions relating to this letter, please feel free to contact Mr Shu-pui Li at 2878 1826 or Mr Brian Lee at 2878 1651.

Yours faithfully,

Y K Choi
Executive Director
(Banking Supervision)

Last revision date : 01 August 2011