

From Mr Andrew Seaton, British Consul-General



**British Consulate-General
Hong Kong**

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**www.ukinhongkong.fco.gov.uk
www.fco.gov.uk**

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Dear British Residents,

I am writing to you today in connection with the current outbreak of swine flu A/H1N1. You will be aware of the international concern about this outbreak, and the fears that this might trigger a global human flu pandemic. This letter sets out what the British Consulate-General could and could not do for you in the event of a pandemic affecting Hong Kong; and gives information on some sources of information and advice.

In the event that this outbreak did become a pandemic, and the pandemic reached Hong Kong, given the likely disruption to transport, healthcare, and other local services, the level of consular assistance and the visa service we could provide would be significantly reduced. In extreme circumstances we might even have to close the Consulate-General temporarily to prevent the spread of infection. We would however seek to maintain a basic consular service during any crisis, including keeping our website and travel advice up to date, increased capacity to answer telephone and email enquiries and provision of emergency consular assistance. In the event of a pandemic affecting Hong Kong the potential number of British nationals here means that we would be unable to offer repatriation back to the UK.

As to steps that you may wish to consider taking, it would be sensible for you to consider whether you would have access to anti-viral drugs and appropriate medical facilities should a pandemic occur.

Those of you working here or in the region should speak to your employers about the contingency plans they have in place for a flu pandemic. Such plans may include access to anti-viral treatment for employees and/or repatriation to the UK.

I suggest also that you visit the websites of the Centre for Health Protection Hong Kong (www.chp.gov.hk), the WHO (www.who.int) and the UK Department of Health (www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu). These websites give important information to help you consider your options and make any necessary preparations before a human flu pandemic occurs. They also give advice on precautions you might take to reduce your risk of infection with an influenza virus. We have also updated our website (www.ukinhongkong.fco.gov.uk) to include information on the swine flu outbreak.

Please continue to monitor the FCO (www.fco.gov.uk) and Consulate-General websites for updates.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Andrew Seaton".

Andrew Seaton