

Airport community testing centre to commence service Thursday

â€œTo further assist members of the public working at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) to undergo COVID-19 testing, the Government will set up a new community testing centre (CTC) at the Ground Transportation Lounge, HKIA, on October 14 (Thursday). Members of the public may make online bookings for the testing service at the Airport CTC starting from 7pm today (October 11).

The CTC at HKIA will commence service at 8am on October 14. All members of the public are welcome to undergo testing there. The CTC is located in the proximity of Terminal 1 and the Airport Bus Terminus, and is conveniently accessible to airport staff for them to undergo frequent testing as required.

A Government spokesman said, "The testing frequency for airport staff has been enhanced since this September. Currently, all airport staff of targeted groups (include those handling high-risk cargo or having unavoidable close range contact with arrival and transfer/transit passengers and crew) must have completed two doses of vaccination and are required to take a test every seven days. As for airport staff who are not under targeted groups (i.e. airport staff with the restricted areas or Terminal 1 of HKIA as their usual place of work (not including the above airport staff of targeted groups)), subject to their vaccination situation, currently they are also required to take a test every three or 14 days. The testing frequency may be increased in future if needed."

CTCs provide self-paid testing services for the public at a more affordable price to serve general community or private purposes such as certification for travelling or work. The price of concerned testing services is capped at \$240. The Government would also, as and when necessary (such as in situations with higher risks of community transmission), conduct necessary testing for targeted groups, specified persons or other citizens at CTCs for public health reasons on a needs basis.

Currently, eligible persons may receive free testing at CTCs, including persons subject to compulsory testing (e.g. those who had been present at a premises visited by a confirmed case), targeted groups required to undergo regular testing (details at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/targeted-testing.html), arrivals in Hong Kong (including those under the Return2hk or Come2hk Schemes), as well as persons with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification. Please stay tuned to the latest announcements in press releases and at CTCs on site.

"The Government has been conducting large-scale COVID-19 testing for groups of different risks under the three key principles of 'compulsory testing on a mandatory basis, targeted testing on an obligatory basis and testing on a voluntary basis'. In the face of the threat posed by mutant

strains and as a preparation for the fifth wave of the epidemic, the Government will continue to expand and enhance the testing arrangements such that we can take effective measures against the cases immediately.

"Taking into account the higher transmissibility of mutant strain cases and as an enhanced prevention against rapid transmission of infected cases in the community during an outbreak of the fifth wave of the epidemic, the Government is also considering increasing the frequency of regular testing for targeted groups, in particular high-risk groups (e.g. staff of residential care homes for the elderly/persons with disabilities, healthcare staff) and high-exposure groups (e.g. airport staff, staff of designated quarantine hotels (DQHs), staff of designated transport to DQHs, personnel working at boundary control points, practitioners of cold stores, marine services sector staff), with a view to achieving the objective of 'early identification, early isolation and early treatment' and cutting the transmission chains as early as possible," said the spokesman.

CTCs provide specimen collection services by using combined nasal and throat swabs and COVID-19 testing services for all asymptomatic individuals holding valid Hong Kong identity cards, Hong Kong birth certificates or other valid identity documents (including Hong Kong residents and non-Hong Kong residents). The centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when they close in the afternoon and at night.

Booking and walk-in services are available at CTCs. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information (including their name, number of valid identity document and phone number for receiving an SMS) on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to select the testing centre and time slot. The booking system will show the booking status of centres for the coming two weeks, and members of the public can choose suitable time slots for testing. The testing centres would accord priority to provide service for individuals with advance bookings. Members of the public may also call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres. The locations, responsible agencies and hotlines of the 19 CTCs, including the CTC at HKIA, are in the Annex.

CTCs have come into service in phases since November 15, 2020. As at October 8 this year, these centres in various districts had provided a total of over 6.9 million tests, of which about 1 150 samples tested preliminarily positive (0.02 per cent) and had been referred to the Centre for Health Protection for confirmatory tests and follow-ups.

The Government spokesman said, "To reduce the risk of virus transmission, testing agencies provide various means of contactless payment. The Government encourages citizens using a self-paid service to reduce or avoid using cash as a means of payment as far as possible."

Participants, upon receiving a self-paid testing service with a negative result, will receive a test report for a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within 24

hours. Persons subject to compulsory testing and persons of targeted groups who are users of a free testing service will also be informed of test results by SMS notifications through their mobile phones. Those who have tested positive as confirmed by the Department of Health (DH) will receive calls from the DH to arrange for isolation and treatment in public hospitals in accordance with established procedures.

The Government reminds the public that they can undergo COVID-19 testing through various means. For details on testing means other than CTCs, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html. Persons who have symptoms should seek medical attention immediately and should not attend the CTCs.