

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Kwai Tsing, Wong Tai Sin and Tsuen Wan Districts

â€œIn light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Kwai Tsing, Wong Tai Sin and Tsuen Wan Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (September 20) that the Kwai Tsing District Office (K&TDO), the Wong Tai Sin District Office (WTSDO) and the Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO) have distributed a total of about 214 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The K&TDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Highland Park, Cho Yiu Chuen, Yuet Lai Court, Yin Lai Court, Ha Kwai Chung Village, Horizon Place, Hibiscus Park and Kwai Chung Centre for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the owners' corporations.

The WTSDO also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Ngau Chi Wan Village, 14-16 Kam Chi Path (even numbers), 21-23 Kam Chi Path (odd numbers), 22-24 Kam Chi Path (even numbers), 29-31 Kam Chi Path (odd numbers), Lung Chi Path, Tin Wang Court, Tin Ma Court, Tsui Chuk Garden and Chuk Yuen United Village for voluntary testing through the property management companies, the Ngau Chi Wan Village Office and the Village Representative. The WTSDO also arranged to distribute rapid test kits to households living in Choi Hung Villa and Man Tak House.

In addition, the TWDO commenced distributing rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Villa Alfavista, Seascape Villa, Royal Sea Crest, Anglers' Bay, Hong Kong Garden Yale Villa, Lung Tang Court, Fou Wah Centre, Tsuen Fung Centre, Waldorf Centre, Fairview Garden, Luk Yeung Sun Chuen, the Cliveden and the Cairnhill for voluntary testing through the property management companies. The TWDO also commenced distributing rapid test kits to households living in Yuen Tun Village, Pai Min Kok Village, Tsing Lung Tau New Village and Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen for voluntary testing through the village heads, a non-governmental organisation and a local organisation.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by

the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.

[Employment and vacancies statistics for June 2022](#)

According to the figures released today (September 20) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), total employment in the private sector surveyed decreased by 1.3% or 34 100 persons in June 2022 compared with a year earlier. The total number of vacancies was 62 500, representing an increase of 38% or 17 060 over the preceding year.

Employment statistics

In June 2022, the selected industries as a whole employed 2 673 200 persons. The import and export trade engaged 382 500 persons, followed by professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services) engaging 297 200 persons, retail trade 244 800 persons, financing and insurance 233 400 persons, and food and beverage services 217 200 persons.

Movements in the employment in different surveyed industries varied when compared with a year earlier. Decreases in employment were mainly recorded in the industries of accommodation services (covering hotels, guesthouses, boarding houses and other establishments providing short term accommodation) (-9.8% or -3 600 persons); manufacturing (-5.3% or -4 300 persons);

transportation, storage, postal and courier services (-3.7% or -6 200 persons); professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services) (-3.1% or -9 500 persons); and arts, entertainment, recreation and other services (-2.8% or -3 300 persons). On the other hand, employment increased mainly in the industries of wholesale (2.6% or 1 300 persons), human health services (2.2% or 3 300 persons), and food and beverage services (1.0% or 2 200 persons). Employment figures for selected major industries are shown in Table 1.

Vacancies statistics

Among the 62 500 private sector vacancies in June 2022, 7 440 were from the industry of education, 5 890 from professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services), 5 860 from human health services, 5 780 from financing and insurance, 4 880 from retail trade, and 4 810 from residential care and social work services.

Vacancies increased in majority of the selected industries in June 2022 over a year earlier. Increases were mainly observed in the industries of human health services (3 700 or 172%), education (2 510 or 51%), food and beverage services (1 470 or 46%), retail trade (1 430 or 41%), and professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services) (1 430 or 32%). On the other hand, vacancies decreased in the industries of import and export trade (-350 or -10%), and cleaning and similar services (-210 or -15%). Job vacancies figures for selected major industries are shown in Table 2.

Analysed by major occupation category, private sector vacancies were observed mainly in the categories of service and sales workers (19 570 vacancies), professionals (12 140 vacancies), and associate professionals (11 700 vacancies). Job vacancies figures by major occupation category are shown in Table 3.

Seasonally adjusted statistics

For discerning the latest trend in employment and vacancies in the private sector, it is useful to look at changes over a three-month period in the respective seasonally adjusted figures. Compared with March 2022, the seasonally adjusted total employment and total vacancies in the surveyed industries decreased by 0.3% and increased by 13.7% respectively in June 2022. The changes over three-month periods in the seasonally adjusted series of employment and vacancies are shown in Table 4.

Other information

The above employment and vacancies statistics were obtained from the Quarterly Survey of Employment and Vacancies and the Quarterly Employment Survey of Construction Sites conducted by the C&SD. In the former survey, some economic activities (e.g. those dominated by self-employment, including taxi operators and hawkers) are not covered. Therefore, the respective employment and vacancies figures relate only to those selected industries

included in the survey. In the latter survey on construction sites, employment and vacancies figures relate to manual workers only.

A detailed breakdown of the above statistics is published in the following reports:

"Quarterly Report of Employment and Vacancies Statistics, June 2022" (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050003&scode=452)

"Quarterly Report of Employment and Vacancies at Construction Sites, June 2022" (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050004&scode=452)

Users can download these publications at the website of the C&SD.

Enquiries on more detailed employment and vacancies statistics can be directed to the Employment Statistics and Central Register of Establishments Section, the C&SD (Tel: 2582 5076; fax: 2827 2296; email: employment@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Government follows up on positive results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing](#)

The Government announced today (September 20) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department and the Drainage Services Department have been collecting sewage samples for virus testing in all districts, and had detected positive results in some areas, indicating that there may be hidden cases in the premises within these areas.

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results with relatively high viral loads in the following areas, the Housing Department and the respective District Office will commence distributing about 195 000 sets of the COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to residents, cleaning workers and property management staff working in the following areas for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identify infected persons:

- Yau Tsim Mong District – Metro Harbour View, One Silver Sea, Hampton Place, Harbour Green, The Long Beach, Imperial Cullinan, Island Harbourview and residential premises around Hak Po Street and Sai Yee

Street (see Annex)

- Yuen Long District – Tin Heng Estate and Tin Shui (I) Estate

Members of the public may refer to (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/rat/eng/rat.html) for enquiries relating to the use of the RAT kits.

When using an RAT kit, please pay attention to and follow the instructions from the manufacturer to perform the test and read the result properly. It is advisable to record the displayed result by taking a photo immediately after reading. Users should wash their hands before and after performing the tests, and avoid placing non-essential items within the specimen collection area. After completing the test, wrap and seal all components of the test kit carefully and dispose properly. If the household environment is contaminated during the specimen collecting process, disinfection should be conducted with 1 in 49 diluted bleach solution or 70 per cent alcohol.

People who obtained a positive result through an RAT for the first time can report via the online platform "Declaration System for individuals tested positive for COVID-19 using Rapid Antigen Test" (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If individuals encounter difficulties using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will contact the relevant person later to finish the report procedure.

Government announces latest situation of fresh food supply from Mainland

A Government spokesman announced today (September 20) that the supply of fresh food from the Mainland yesterday (September 19) was sufficient and stable.

According to the latest information, the quantity of vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong yesterday (as of midnight) by land and water transportation was over 2 600 tonnes, comparable to the average daily supply from the Mainland on a normal day. The volume of vegetables sold through the wholesale markets of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Vegetable Marketing Organization was about 783 tonnes. The average wholesale prices of choi sum and pak choi stood at \$5.00 and \$5.80 per catty respectively yesterday. The supply of eggs to the wholesale market remained steady, with the average daily supply standing at over 3.1 million for the past week, comparable to the average daily supply on a normal day last year.

The total supply of chilled pork from the Mainland yesterday was about 39 tonnes. The supply of live pigs was plentiful.

The supply of chilled poultry from the Mainland was over 140 000 head yesterday, and over 8 000 live chickens were slaughtered locally. The supply was abundant.

Regarding the rice supply, in compliance with the requirement by the Government, stockholders of rice have to maintain the reserve stock of rice at a level sufficient for consumption by the local population for 15 days. The trade generally stocks double the required amount, which is sufficient for one month's consumption by Hong Kong citizens. In recent years, the import and consumption of rice in Hong Kong has stood at a steady level of around 320 000 to 330 000 tonnes per year. The import quantity (including reserve stock) as of end-August 2022 was 27 100 tonnes. Suppliers also maintain a reserve for food that can be stored, such as frozen meat, for around three months' stock generally.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the Mainland authorities and major food suppliers to ensure a stable food supply.

The AFCD updates and publishes the fresh food supply information daily. Members of the public may visit the AFCD website for updates on daily supplies and wholesale prices of fresh food (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/agriculture/agr_fresh/agr_fresh.html).

HKMA's policy stance on e-HKD

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today (September 20) released a position paper titled "e-HKD: Charting the Next Steps" to set out its policy stance on retail Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), i.e. e-HKD, and outline its next steps.

As part of its "Fintech 2025" strategy to future-proof Hong Kong in terms of CBDC readiness, the HKMA has examined the prospect of issuing e-HKD in Hong Kong from both the technical and policy perspectives. Two rounds of market consultation, one on high-level technical design and one on key policy and design issues, were conducted.

In total, 75 responses were received (Note) during the consultation. Overall, the respondents are supportive of the e-HKD initiative and believe that e-HKD has the potential to make payments more effective while supporting the digital economy. At the same time, the respondents also pointed out the need to further examine issues such as privacy protection, legal considerations, and use cases. Taking into account the findings of the study

and the feedback received, the HKMA will start paving the way for possible implementation of e-HKD in the future. A three-rail approach will be adopted:

- Rail 1 aims to lay the technology and legal foundations for supporting the implementation of e-HKD. Specifically, a plan will be formulated for developing the wholesale layer of the two-tier e-HKD system. In addition, the HKMA will identify and examine areas to prepare for legislative amendments, with a view to enabling the issuance of a digital form of fiat currency with legal tender status in Hong Kong.
- Under Rail 2, which will run in parallel to Rail 1, the HKMA will take deep dives into use cases as well as application, implementation, and design issues relating to e-HKD. It will also conduct a series of pilots in close collaboration with various stakeholders to gain actual experience.
- Rail 3 is concerned with launching e-HKD. It will consolidate the outcomes of Rail 1 and Rail 2 for more thorough implementation planning, and will set the timeline for launching e-HKD. The progress of Rail 3 will depend on the actual progress made under Rail 1 and Rail 2, as well as the pace of relevant local and international market development.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, said, "The two rounds of market consultation have registered widespread support for the e-HKD initiative. We welcome the positive feedback received and agreed with the respondents the need to take a deep dive into issues such as privacy protection and use cases. As Hong Kong's central banking institution, we will ensure that Hong Kong continues to play a leading role in the global financial landscape by getting ourselves ready as best we can in terms of CBDC and by providing the right soil for growing innovative ideas."

A summary of the feedback received to the two rounds of market consultation, as well as the HKMA's response, together with the details of the three-rail approach can be found in the [linked paper](#).

Note: Respondents included academia, a central bank, consulting companies, financial institutions, fintech firms, individuals, industry bodies, non-bank professional organisations, public sector entities, and technology companies.