

Government follows up on positive results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing

The Government announced today (February 6) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the Drainage Services Department in collaboration with the cross-disciplinary team of the University of Hong Kong had strengthened the sampling of sewage for virus testing in all districts, and had detected positive results in many areas, indicating that there may be hidden cases in the premises within these areas.

Compulsory testing

In response to the positive sewage testing results in Tuen Mun and Wong Tai Sin, the Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, requiring any person who had been present at the following specified premises (see Annex) during the specified period to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test-

- Sewage Testing Area Tuen Mun Tai Hing Gardens 03 (THG-03) – Blocks 10 and 11, Phase 2, Tai Hing Gardens, Tuen Mun
- Sewage Testing Area Tuen Mun Chelsea Heights 04 (CH-04) – Blocks 5 and 6, Phase 2, Chelsea Heights, Tuen Mun
- Sewage Testing Area Wong Tai Sin 022 (WTS-022) – Towers 1 to 6, Grand View Garden; and Commercial and Car Park Block, Grand View Garden, Wong Tai Sin
- Sewage Testing Area Wong Tai Sin Kingsford Terrace 1 (Kingsford Terrace 1) – Blocks 1 to 5, Kingsford Terrace, Wong Tai Sin

The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. They are advised to closely monitor their health conditions. They should seek medical attention and undergo testing even if they have only mild symptoms.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the website of the Centre for Health Protection, the Department of Health, via www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/105294.html .

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results in Tuen Mun and Yau Tsim Mong District, the Home Affairs Department (including Tuen Mun District Office) will distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits to residents and all cleansing workers and property management staff working in the following areas starting from tomorrow (February 7) for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identifying infected persons –

- Sewage Testing Area Tuen Mun Leung King Estate 03 (LKE-03) (Part) – Siu Lung Court, Tuen Mun

In addition, the Home Affairs Department (including Yau Tsim Mong District Office) will distribute three sets of COVID-19 rapid test kits to all cleansing workers and property management staff working in the following area (see Annex) through the Hong Kong Property Services Alliance and the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identifying infected persons. The Government appeals to residents and those working in these areas who have been exposed to infection risks to undergo testing on a voluntary basis to achieve "early identification, early isolation and early treatment".

- Sewage Testing Area Yau Ma Tei Site 2A (YMT Site 2A) – (Area around Portland Street and Mong Kok Road)

Residents may refer to (www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjLzD3-gab4) for enquiries relating to the use of the rapid test kits.

If positive test result is shown on the test kit, medical attention should be sought at the Accident and Emergency Departments promptly to receive appropriate diagnosis and treatment at the earliest possible time. Residents tested positive should stay home as far as possible to avoid spreading the virus in the community. The Government stresses that rapid test kit testing is not a substitute for the compulsory testing requirement. Individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, who have visited places with epidemic outbreaks or have had contact with persons tested positive, etc, should undergo testing promptly at testing centres.

In addition, the EPD has uploaded the boundary of places with compulsory testing notice issued due to the sewage samples tested positive and related information to the dashboard of the thematic website "Together, We Fight the Virus", to facilitate the reference from the public, via <https://chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html>.

FSD fireman preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19

The Fire Services Department (FSD) said today (February 6) that a fireman serving at Tsing Yi Fireboat Station has been tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19. The FSD has been following up on the case with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health and waiting for further instruction from the CHP.

The fireman last performed duties on February 5. He did not have close or high risk contact with the members of the public while at work. He wore masks and followed relevant disease prevention measures at work. The FSD has arranged thorough cleaning and disinfection at the premises concerned and in the vicinity in accordance with the CHP's advice and maintained close liaison with the CHP in taking appropriate follow-up actions.

The FSD has made arrangement on staff deployment to ensure that relevant services are not affected.

The FSD has been strictly implementing disease prevention measures during the epidemic. Staff members are reminded to pay attention to personal hygiene and to stay vigilant. They should seek medical advice immediately if feeling unwell.

Three Hongkong Post staff members tested positive/preliminarily positive for COVID-19

Hongkong Post said today (February 6) that two contract staff members were tested positive, and one postal officer was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19.

The two contract staff who were tested positive work at Book Sorting Unit (BSU) in Cheung Sha Wan and the Air Mail Centre (AMC) respectively. They are not required to have contact with the public and their working places are not open to the public. They last performed duty on February 5. The contract staff at BSU conducted test as a close contact of a confirmed case and was tested positive today. The contract staff at AMC felt unwell on February 5 and sought medical consultation at the hospital. He underwent the COVID-19 testing on the same day and was tested positive today.

The Postal Officer who was tested preliminarily positive works in Sheung

Wan Post Office who last performed duty on February 4. She works at the counter behind a partition to keep appropriate distance from customers. She underwent COVID-19 testing on February 3 and was notified by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of her preliminary positive result today.

The above staff had temperature screening when attended to work and their body temperature was normal. They were wearing masks while on duty.

Upon notification of the above cases, Hongkong Post has immediately arranged all co-workers of the staff concerned to undergo COVID-19 testing. Hongkong Post has also closed two operation units at BSU and AMC, and arranged for thorough cleansing and disinfection of all the facilities and mail items pursuant to the guidelines set out by the CHP. Meanwhile, Hongkong Post has activated its contingency plan by arranging the processing of inbound and outbound mail at other mail centres in order to maintain its services as far as practicable.

Besides, Sheung Wan Post Office will be closed from February 7 to 8 for thorough cleansing and disinfection of all the facilities and mail items pursuant to the guidelines set out by the CHP. With closure of Sheung Wan Post Office, members of the public can have access to postal services at General Post Office (2 Connaught Place, Central) nearby. Hongkong Post apologises for the inconvenience caused. For enquiries, members of the public may call the Hongkong Post enquiry hotline at 2921 2222.

Hongkong Post will continue to implement measures on social distancing and infection control at all postal facilities to safeguard the health of staff and the public, and maintain close liaison with the CHP. Staff members are also reminded to take note of their personal hygiene and stay vigilant at all times, and are advised to seek medical advice immediately in case of feeling unwell.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (February 6), 138 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 13 125 patients have been discharged.

A total of 1 495 patients who had tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre, the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo and 15 public hospitals, including one

critical and one serious patients. The remainder are in stable condition.

The HA will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

The case numbers of the discharged, serious and critical patients are as follows:

CHP investigates 157 confirmed and 32 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 153 pending cases status

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 6) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 6, the CHP was investigating 157 additional confirmed cases, 32 additional asymptomatic cases and 153 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 342 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). Hong Kong has recorded a total of 15 408 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

All the 342 newly reported cases are locally acquired cases and the CHP is actively investigating their sources of infection to see whether they are epidemiologically linked with previous cases. 312 of the cases involve mutant strains, the mutation test results of 18 cases are pending and the viral load of the remaining 12 cases is insufficient for mutation tests. For case details and contact tracing information, please see www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/20220206_covid19_daily_annex.pdf or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk). Case status and classification may be subject to changes when there is new information available during epidemiological investigation and latest information is shown on "COVID-19 Thematic Website".

Meanwhile, for the 342 locally acquired cases announced yesterday (February 5), the CHP's latest epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing classified that 207 cases are epidemiologically linked with previous cases and 135 cases are local cases.

As at 4pm today, a total of 1 921 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 23 to

February 5). 705 of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related, 336 are local cases, 642 are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases.

Separately, to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus, the CHP has arranged/will arrange the residents concerned of the following building(s), where cases suspectedly related to environmental factors (including vertical/horizontal transmission, adjacent yard area and shared pipes) were detected, to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre:

- Hing Tai House, Tai Hing Estate, Tuen Mun: residents of units 06 on all floors

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility. With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the

community.