

Government responds to media enquiries on fresh food supply from Mainland

In response to media enquiries about the fresh food supply from the Mainland, a Government spokesman gave the following response today (February 6):

The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) together with the Transport and Housing Bureau and other relevant bureaux/departments have been maintaining close communication with the Mainland authorities on the impact on importation of vegetables to Hong Kong as a result of cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers being tested positive in COVID-19 nucleic acid test undergone in the Mainland. It is learnt that an individual cross-boundary goods vehicle driver has gone to places which have not been reported to the Mainland prior to his entry. As a consequence, the Mainland authorities needed to handle the incident seriously and conduct contact tracing in order to prevent the virus from spreading in the community. Some drivers were thus required to stay in the hotel for isolation.

Currently, apart from individual cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers who have been defined as close contacts and are still subject to isolation in the hotels, the rest of the drivers were released from the hotel to resume their normal operation. The Transport Department has also sent letters to the cross-boundary goods vehicle trade yesterday (February 5), reminding the drivers to strictly follow the anti-epidemic and health management measures under the joint prevention and control mechanism agreed between the Governments of Hong Kong and Guangdong.

On the supply of vegetables, it is understood that in consideration of the importance of fresh food supply to Hong Kong, the Mainland authorities have already made flexible arrangements to allow transportation of vegetables to Hong Kong by other registered drivers deployed by the industry. At 9am today, some 20 goods vehicles were awaiting to cross the boundary at Man Kam To. They were released back to Hong Kong subsequently. The vegetable supply at the Vegetable Marketing Organization and Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Food Market today is of similar level as usual while the overall supply of vegetable in Western Wholesale Food Market experiences a drop. Nevertheless, the overall supply remains stable. Also, the supply of chilled pork, poultry and eggs from the Mainland is at a normal level. The FHB will continue to maintain contact with relevant bureaux/departments and the industry and keep a close watch on the food supply.

COVID-19 preliminary positive patients of various public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (February 6) announced three preliminary positive COVID-19 patient cases detected via admission screening or routine testing arrangements:

An 89-year-old female patient admitted to the orthopaedics & traumatology ward of Kwong Wah Hospital on February 5 was found to be preliminarily positive to COVID-19 during the admission screening. The patient was transferred, in stable condition, to the isolation ward for treatment immediately. The hospital's infection control team had conducted contact tracing accordingly. Four patients in the same cubicle were identified as close contacts. Besides, a nurse who carried out oral examination for the patient without eye protection was also identified as a close contact. They would be quarantine as required.

A 62-year-old female patient visited the medical ward of Queen Elizabeth Hospital for regular haemodialysis treatment on February 5. She has obtained negative result at the routine COVID-19 test before the treatment and was found preliminarily positive at the routine test conducted on the day. The patient concerned is asymptomatic and is now under isolation treatment with stable condition.

The hospital's infection control team has conducted contact tracing and found that the patient concerned had briefly taken off the mask when taking medication. Four patients in the same ward were classified as close contacts and are now isolated for quarantine arrangement. Healthcare staff in the ward concerned are equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment in accordance with the infection control guideline and currently no staff member is classified as a close contact.

A 31-year-old male patient admitted to a mixed specialty ward of Pok Oi Hospital in the early morning of February 5 was found to be preliminarily positive to COVID-19 during admission screening. The patient has been transferred to an isolation ward for treatment and is currently in stable condition.

The hospital infection control team conducted contact tracing and noted that the patient vomited during his stay in the mixed specialty ward. A phlebotomist who took blood for the patient and an operation assistant who took care of the patient when he vomited were classified as close contacts. They would be quarantined as required. Six other patients nearby would be transferred to the surveillance ward.

Thorough cleaning and disinfection have been arranged in the affected

areas by the hospitals concerned, which will continue to communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Mei Chi House, Mei Tin Estate, Sha Tin

The Government today (February 6) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 8.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sha Tin (i.e. Mei Chi House, Mei Tin Estate, Sha Tin, excluding Mei Tin Estate Management Office on G/F. See Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 10am tomorrow (February 7).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As the sewage discharged from the above building was tested positive for COVID-19, it is suspected that there are asymptomatic patients in the building. Given the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 2am tomorrow. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange for door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to

carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 10am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from January 24 to February 6, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before February 8, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory 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 compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Field officer of AFCD tests positive for COVID-19

â€‹The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (February 6) announced that a field officer, who worked at the Hong Kong Wetland Park in Tin Shui Wai, tested positive for COVID-19.

The staff member is responsible for conservation work at the Wetland Reserve of the Hong Kong Wetland Park and has no contact with the public in

daily work. He last went to work on January 31. He wore surgical masks and observed relevant infection control measures when performing duties and had no recent travel history.

An AFCD spokesman said that the department was arranging thorough cleaning and disinfection at his working area and the public utilities according to the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP).

The AFCD is highly concerned about the COVID-19 epidemic and will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP. Staff are reminded to pay attention to personal hygiene and to stay vigilant. They should seek medical advice immediately if feeling unwell.

In view of the development of COVID-19, the Hong Kong Wetland Park has been temporarily closed since January 7 until further notice.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Mei King House, Mei Tin Estate, Sha Tin

The Government today (February 6) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 8pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sha Tin (i.e. Mei King House, Mei Tin Estate, Sha Tin, excluding the car park thereat. See Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 10am tomorrow (February 7).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As the sewage discharged from the above building was tested positive for COVID-19, it is suspected that there are asymptomatic patients in the building. Given the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 1am tomorrow. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange for door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 10am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

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The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory 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 compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.