

## **CSD suspends social visits to persons in custody in light of epidemic development**

In view of recent repeated cases where members of the public who tested positive for COVID-19 had paid social visits to persons in custody in different correctional institutions, which have substantially increased the risk of large-scale outbreaks caused by the introduction of a highly contagious variant virus into the institutions, the Correctional Services Department will suspend social visits to persons in custody (including convicted and remand persons) from tomorrow (February 5) to February 13 (Sunday) to ensure the safety of persons in custody and various stakeholders. In case of emergencies during the above period, persons concerned may call the staff of the Rehabilitation Unit of respective correctional institutions for follow-up.

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## **Latest arrangements for services in Lands Department offices**

In accordance with the implementation of special work arrangements in Government departments, the Lands Department (LandsD) today (February 4) announced that arrangements have been made for staff to work from home as far as possible to achieve social distancing more effectively, with a view to reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19 in the community. All LandsD offices will provide basic public services on a limited scale from February 7 (Monday) to February 11 (Friday). Services for receipt and delivery of documents at counters, collection of compensation for land resumption by appointment and enquiry telephone lines will be provided between 1pm and 5pm during this period. Other counter services, including counter enquiries, map sales, collection of compensation for land resumption, depositing of land boundary plans and survey record plans and inspection of the full list of Authorised Land Surveyors, will be suspended. Online services will be maintained as normal. Members of the public may continue to make enquiries or complaints through email.

An appeal is made to the public to minimise visits to the LandsD's offices in person unless necessary. The public can purchase most map products from Hong Kong Map Service 2.0 and can file enquiries or complaints as well as requests for service online or through other electronic means. Due to the special work arrangements, the processing of various enquiries, complaints

and applications may be delayed and it may take a longer time to provide a reply. The department apologises for any inconvenience caused.

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## **Senior Customs Officer preliminarily tests positive for COVID-19**

A Senior Customs Officer preliminarily tested positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in regular COVID-19 testing last night (February 3).

The officer is posted to the Heung Yuen Wai Control Point and performed cargo clearance duties. His last working day was February 2. He has no travel history in the past 14 days and has been wearing surgical masks when performing duties. He is now in stable condition.

All Customs frontline officers working at the Heung Yuen Wai Control Point have all along been arranged by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) to undergo COVID-19 testing once every three days. Up till now, test results of the other officers have been negative.

The C&ED is highly concerned about the incident and has taken the following measures:

- (1) Arrangements have been made for all departmental staff who might have been in contact with the Senior Customs Officer concerned to undergo COVID-19 tests;
- (2) Cleaning and sterilisation arrangements at the working places of the Senior Customs Officer concerned have been made;
- (3) All officers have been further reminded to pay attention to personal hygiene and reduce social contact to minimise risks of infection. If feeling unwell, they should report the case and consult a doctor immediately; and
- (4) Flexible manpower deployment has been made to ensure provision of services remains unaffected.

The C&ED will maintain close communication with the Department of Health and will fully co-operate to trace close contacts of the officer concerned.

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## Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tai Po and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice (with photo)

The Government yesterday (February 3) 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 7pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tai Po (i.e. Fu Cheong Court, Kwai Cheong Court and Wing Cheong Court of Fortune Plaza, 4 On Chee Road, Tai Po) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained.

Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday, requiring persons who had been present at the above buildings, for more than two hours from January 21 to February 3, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing on or before February 5, 2022. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 10.15am today (February 4) and carried out enforcement action in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing in accordance with the requirements of the relevant declaration and compulsory testing notice. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at around 12pm today.

In this exercise, the Environment Bureau, the Environmental Protection Department, the Civil Service Bureau, the Home Affairs Department (including the Tai Po District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Auxiliary Medical Service mobilised around 230 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupled with the tireless efforts of the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results by SMS notification. After finishing the compulsory testing exercise at around 10.15am today, the Government took

enforcement action in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone testing according to the requirements of the declaration and the compulsory testing notice. Persons who could present an SMS notification containing a negative testing result or wore a wristband as proof of having undergone the compulsory testing could leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer. The enforcement operation was completed at around 12pm. Test records of around 550 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked. Twenty persons were found not having undergone compulsory testing and compulsory testing order was issued to them. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

The Government reminds the about 60 households who have not answered the door to contact the Government for arrangement of testing as soon as possible after reading the notices put up by the Government, in the hope of eliminating the possible risk of further spread of the virus in the community.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the results at home.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will 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 or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.



## Government employees residing in Kwai Chung Estate and Kwai Fuk Court can perform duties according to special work arrangements

As the epidemic situation in Kwai Chung Estate has become stable, the Government informed all bureaux and departments today (February 4) that starting from February 7, government employees residing in Kwai Chung Estate and Kwai Fuk Court can return to their offices in accordance with departmental instructions having regard to the prevailing special work arrangements.

A government spokesman expressed gratitude to residents of the estates for their full co-operation which enabled the smooth implementation of the anti-epidemic work.