

Employers and employees should take precautions during cold weather

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Cold Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Cold Weather Warning is in force, they should take appropriate precautions such as reminding employees who have to work outdoors or in remote areas to wear appropriately warm clothing, and make arrangements for employees to rotate from outdoor to indoor or sheltered work sites as far as possible. Employees should take note of the weather report, wear appropriately warm clothing and be mindful of their health conditions. They should notify their supervisors and seek medical help immediately if feeling unwell, such as having cold limbs and body shivering.

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

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, which requires any person who had been present at 43 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of 11 local cases, 18 cases linked with previous cases and two cases tested preliminarily positive, 41 specified premises are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. The Government will knock on doors at the specified premises to notify residents of the compulsory testing requirement. Mobile specimen collection stations will be set up as far as possible to ensure testing are conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. 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.

Furthermore, since some sewage samples collected in Kowloon City and Mong Kok have tested positive, two specified premises are included in the

compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link:
(www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220131.pdf).

Except for tests that, as specified, may be carried out using deep throat saliva sample, persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo the test using a stool specimen.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated as soon as possible for better self-protection.

Subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with a mutant strain, 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 Department of Health (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). In addition, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, has to undergo testing within two days of him or her becoming aware that the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (6275 6901), fax (2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test. For prudence's sake, the above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

CTCs provide testing services for the public, including free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance

bookings. As of 6pm on January 31, there were around 11 000 booking places available for today (February 1) at the CTCs, and around 59 per cent and 78 per cent availability for booking places for the coming seven days and 14 days respectively. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres. All 19 CTCs in the city will operate as usual during Chinese New Year and open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm.

The Government will set up additional mobile specimen collection stations at basketball court next to Sin Tat House of On Tat Estate in Kwun Tong and open space between Luk Yat House and Ying Yat House of Yat Tung (1) Estate in Tung Chung today, and the mobile specimen collection station at Shek Pai Street Park in Kwai Chung will also continue operation to provide free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Aldrich Bay Playground and Choi Wan Estate Community Centre will be extended to February 3 and 7 respectively. In view of the overall testing demand across Hong Kong, the mobile specimen collection station at 557 Shanghai Street in Mong Kok (opposite to Langham Place) will cease operation from today onwards in order to tackle the latest epidemic development more effectively. As today is Lunar New Year's Day, the mobile specimen collection truck providing free testing for cold store practitioners in Kwai Tsing district will suspend service.

Free testing service will be provided to persons subject to compulsory testing at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located at 52 places in various districts today. The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. Persons subject to compulsory testing and those who received the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the CHP reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may conduct free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

- (a) For tests which require using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs
1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
 2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);
 3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or
 4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

- (b) For tests which may be carried out using deep throat saliva sample, or

for persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 120 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the CTCs, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the CTCs are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and 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.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

[Additional quarantine hotels for close contacts](#)

The Government announced today (January 31) that three hotels will be added as quarantine hotels for close contacts of cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus during the period from February 1 to April 30. Dorsett Mongkok, Hong Kong and Grand City Hotel will be activated tomorrow (February 1), whereas Dorsett Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong will commence operation on February 10.

In the light of the increasing numbers of cases tested positive and close contacts that need to be quarantined at quarantine facilities, the Government has activated the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre, the Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village, Junior Police Call Permanent Activity Centre in Pat Heung, Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre and four quarantine hotels, providing around 5 200 units in total for close contacts and their household contacts. The additional three quarantine hotels will on top provide a total of around 1 000 units to cope with the recent surge in demand for quarantine facilities.

Dorsett Mongkok, Hong Kong, Grand City Hotel and Dorsett Tsuen Wan, Hong Kong are currently designated quarantine hotels (DQHs) under the sixth and seventh cycles of the DQH Scheme. With immediate effect, these three hotels temporarily cease operating as DQHs and taking reservations for inbound travellers during the aforementioned period. Persons currently under quarantine at these three hotels will be arranged in phases to transfer to other DQHs to continue their quarantine in accordance with infection control guidelines.

A Government spokesman said, "Quarantine is an important and effective measure to prevent the virus from spreading in the community. We will closely monitor and review the situation of various quarantine facilities every day and make timely adjustments if necessary, so that quarantine facilities could be used for persons with higher risks to the community for preventing the virus from entering the community via these persons."

Conditional free COVID-19 testing service continues for targeted groups

The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) announced today (January 31) that the free COVID-19 testing service will continue to be provided for eligible persons of targeted groups at community testing centres (CTCs).

In view of the ongoing severe situation of COVID-19 infection, particularly with the Omicron mutant strain keeps on spreading rapidly around the world, the Government continues to implement the large-scale COVID-19 testing for groups of different risks, such that effective measures are taken against the cases immediately to cut off transmission chains as quickly as possible. The testing of all targeted group persons, whether they have completed a vaccination course or not, must be done by using combined nasal and throat swabs collected by professionals. The arrangement is applicable to all full-time and part-time staff of relevant industries.

Persons of targeted groups eligible for receiving free COVID-19 testing at CTCs are mainly those who are vaccinated or those who are unfit for vaccination because of health reasons. They must present valid medical certificates/vaccination records/documents of identity proof (see Notes) for receiving free tests. This requirement is applicable to all targeted groups. In other words, persons of targeted groups will need to pay for the regular testing service if they do not fall under the category of being unfit for vaccination because of health reasons. The specific requirements for eligible persons of various targeted groups (including testing frequency, specimen requirement, conditions for receiving free test) are set out in the Annex.

Furthermore, based on the latest epidemic risk assessment, the Government is providing free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to all cleaning workers and security and guarding personnel in Hong Kong at the CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable) for two weeks till February 6 to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers.

Moreover, the CTCs also continue to provide free voluntary testing service for staff members of residential care homes for the elderly, residential care homes for persons with disabilities and nursing homes who are fully vaccinated (can receive a free test every seven days on a voluntary basis) and personnel working in markets, licensed hawkers and fully vaccinated practitioners working at Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (can receive a free test every 28 days on a voluntary basis).

In the light of the epidemic development in Hong Kong, the Government has implemented tightened social distancing measures for catering businesses and scheduled premises operating under the Prevention and Control of Disease

(Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). Staff of relevant premises may refer to the [latest announcements](#) for the current operation conditions. Persons of targeted groups who still have the need to undergo testing have to make bookings online (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) before receiving the free testing service at CTCs. Those who have no appointment or do not meet the eligibility/conditions will need to pay for the testing service at a cost of \$240. The free testing arrangement will be available until the end of February. All 19 CTCs in the city will operate as usual during Chinese New Year and open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm.

The Government regularly reviews the coverage and frequency of targeted group testing and if such testing should be publicly funded based on the latest epidemic risk assessment. A spokesman for the FHB said that the provision of free tests for targeted groups involves the use of public resources. Given that the Government must uphold the principle of effective use of resources, public money should only be used to subsidise individual eligible persons for taking nucleic acid tests in very exceptional situations.

The spokesman reiterated that the two COVID-19 vaccines currently recognised in Hong Kong are safe and effective, giving protection to the vaccinated persons and those around them. The vaccines have been received by billions of people worldwide and getting vaccination is the best way to fight the virus. Except for those with contraindications, most people are fit for vaccination. At present, all Hong Kong residents aged 5 or above are eligible for receiving free COVID-19 vaccination. The Government calls on the public to treasure the vaccine supply in Hong Kong and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Notes:

- (i) Persons who are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination because of health reasons are required to present a relevant medical certificate;
- (ii) persons who are vaccinated (i.e. have received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, or received the second dose but have not yet passed 14 days, or completed a vaccination course of two doses) should present a relevant vaccination record (such as by downloading their electronic vaccination records or saving the printouts of their vaccination records to their mobile phones, or bringing along the printouts or copies of their vaccination records); and
- (iii) certain groups should also present card/letter/document proof issued by relevant organisations for verification of identity.

[Government follows up on positive](#)

results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing

The Government announced today (January 31) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department 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 Kowloon City and Mong Kok, 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 –

- Sheung Ching House, Kai Ching Estate
- Sewage Testing Area YTM Site 116 (Area around Shanghai Street near Fife Street, Mong Kok.)

The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. The Government will knock on doors at the specified premises to notify residents of the compulsory testing requirement. Mobile testing stations will be set up as far as possible to ensure testing are conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. 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 Tai Po, Tsuen Wan and Kowloon City, the Home Affairs Department (including Tai Po District Office) will distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits to residents in the following areas

starting from tomorrow (February 1) for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identify infected persons –

- Tsui Wo House, Tai Wo Estate, Tai Po

In addition, the Government will distribute three sets of COVID-19 rapid test kits to all cleansing workers and property management staff working in the following areas (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 identify 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"

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- Sewage Testing Area Tsuen Wan Site 3A (Area around Luk Yeung Sun Chuen, Shek Wai Kok Estate, Cheung Shan Estate)
- Sewage Testing Area Kowloon City Site 1 (Area around Kai Ching Estate, Kai Long Court and Vibe Centro)

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.