

Transport Department's latest service arrangements

To align with the Government's anti-epidemic measures and to meet public demand for services, the Transport Department (TD) said today (January 24) that the services of the TD will be arranged from January 25 as follows until further notice:

Licensing and related services

The TD's Licensing Offices, Public Vehicles Unit, Vehicle Records Office, Driving Licence Records Office, Driving Offence Points Office and Cross Boundary Unit will maintain walk-in counter services to process various licensing and related applications.

To avoid crowd gatherings and reduce waiting time at the Licensing Office, the TD appeals to members of the public to use the online appointment services as far as possible. They may also submit applications via the drop-in boxes at the Licensing Offices, by post or online to suit their needs. Those submitting an application by post or via drop-in box should put the completed application form, all necessary documents and the appropriate fee (by crossed cheque payable to either "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR") into an envelope. Original identity documents and cash must not be sent by post or drop-in box. To avoid unnecessary delays, they should submit applications three to four weeks before the expiry dates as far as practicable.

Vehicle examination services

The Transport Department Vehicle Examination Complex (TDVEC), Sheung Kwai Chung Vehicle Examination Centre and all designated car testing centres will continue to provide various vehicle examination services.

Driving test services

After having considered the social distancing measures and the ways of conducting driving tests for different classes of motor vehicles, apart from road tests of Motorcycle (including Competence Test and Part C test), all driving tests services (including road tests, written test (Part A) and Taxi written test) originally scheduled from January 27 will be suspended until further notice. The TD will notify the affected candidates individually of the rescheduled test date after resumption of the driving test services.

Candidates who have been scheduled to take a Motorcycle Competence Test and Part C test on or after January 27 should continue attending the test according to the test date, time and driving test centre specified in the driving test appointment letter.

In addition, the counter services of the TD's Driving Test Appointment

Office at Cheung Sha Wan, the online booking service for driving test appointments and telephone booking service for the Repeater Early Driving Test will be suspended from January 27. The TD's driving test appointment services (including handling of applications for driving test and test postponement, etc) will also be suspended from the same date until further notice.

The TD also reminds members of the public that except for exempted persons, all visitors are required to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application before entering the TD's premises and have to undergo on-the-spot body temperature checks arranged by the TD. Anyone who refuses to observe the above requirements or whose body temperature is higher than 37.5 degrees Celsius will be denied entry to the premises. The staff on site will also request visitors to clean their hands with alcohol-based sanitiser before entry and wear masks at all times in the premises.

The TD will closely monitor the development of the epidemic and adjust its services to align with the Government's anti-epidemic measures and arrangements, and will notify the public in due course. For enquiries, members of the public can contact the offices concerned of the TD at the following numbers:

Hong Kong Licensing Office	2804 2636
Kowloon Licensing Office	2150 7728
Kwun Tong Licensing Office	2775 6835
Sha Tin Licensing Office	2606 1468
Public Vehicles Unit	2804 2574
Vehicle Records Office	2867 4691
Driving Licence Records Office	2804 2596
Driving Office Points Office	2804 2594
Cross Boundary Unit	2543 2114
Driving Test Centre/Driving Test Appointment Office	2771 7723
Sheung Kwai Chung Vehicle Examination Centre	2424 5215
TDVEC, 2/F (buses)	3961 0307
TDVEC, 2/F (parallel imported vehicles)	3961 0308
TDVEC, 1/F	3961 0306
TDVEC, G/F	2751 8862

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory

testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po

The Government today (January 24) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po (i.e. Hing Fung Building, 169-171 Pei Ho Street, Sham Shui Po. 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 7am tomorrow (January 25).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As a case tested positive who has lived in the abovementioned building was detected today, and the test result involved a mutant strain, the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, so the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area after the test result was found to be positive."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 12am 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 7am 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 18 to January 24, 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 January 26, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, and having considered relevant infection risks, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

In addition, in accordance with the latest arrangement, persons who resided in the same building as the case tested positive carrying variants of concern are required to undergo compulsory testing on days 3 and 7 counting from the day subsequent to that when the relevant confirmed case last stayed in that building before being admitted to hospital for treatment or leaving Hong Kong.

The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which starts operation at 7pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

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.

Latest arrangements for Inland Revenue Department's public services

In view of the latest development of local epidemic situation and the new special work arrangements for government employees, the Inland Revenue Department announced today (January 24) that the opening hours of its offices will be adjusted as follows from tomorrow (January 25):

Offices	Opening hours
Central Enquiry Counter Business Registration Office* Stamp Office Collection Enforcement Sections Refund Section	From 9am to noon and from 1.30pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday
Central Telephone Enquiry	From 9am to 12.30pm and from 1.30pm to 4pm, Monday to Friday

(* For service users who have made online appointments for counter services before 9am on a day, please go to the Business Registration Office at 9am or 10am on the day. For those who have made online appointments for counter services after 4pm on a day, please go to the Business Registration Office at 2pm on the day.)

The department appeals to members of the public for their understanding that the above services will be provided at a reduced scale, and they should be prepared to experience a longer waiting time before they can be served. The department encourages the public to use electronic services to handle tax affairs as much as possible. A list of such services can be found in the department's website at www.ird.gov.hk/eng/ese/index.htm.

Since tax payments, lodgement of objections and holdover applications, and submission of tax returns and information can be made or performed without social contact, the relevant deadlines will not be extended. If members of the public experience difficulties in handling the relevant matters, they should contact the department by electronic means, by post or by fax (www.ird.gov.hk/eng/cu_enqs.htm).

The department will review the situation and make further announcements as necessary.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Kwai Chung

The Government today (January 24) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration"

(declaration) effective from 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Ha Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate. 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 7am tomorrow (January 25).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As a number of cases tested preliminarily positive/positive have been detected at Kwai Chung Estate in recent days, including a case tested positive who has lived in the abovementioned building, and the test result involved a mutant strain, the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, so the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area after the test result was found to be positive. "

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 12am 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 7am 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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing today, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such

persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, 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 16, 2022 to January 24, 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 January 26, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, and having considered relevant infection risks, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

In addition, in accordance with the latest arrangement, persons who resided in the same building as the case tested positive carrying variant of concern suspected to be Omicron are required to undergo compulsory testing on days 2, 3, 4 and 7 counting from the day subsequent to that when the relevant confirmed case last stayed in that building before being admitted to hospital for treatment or leaving Hong Kong.

The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which starts operation at 7pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

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.

Labour Department investigates fatal work accident in West Kowloon Cultural District

The Labour Department (LD) is investigating a fatal work accident that happened in the West Kowloon Cultural District this afternoon (January 24) in which a man died.

The LD immediately deployed staff to the scene upon receiving a report of the accident, and is now conducting an investigation to look into its

cause.