

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Tai Wo Hau

The Government today (January 23) 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 Tai Wo Hau (i.e. Fu Keung House, Tai Wo Hau 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 24).

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 1am today. 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 14, 2022 to January 23, 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 25, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, and having considered relevant infection risks, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons 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.

Contract technical assistant of Housing Department tests preliminary positive for COVID-19

The Housing Department today (January 23) learned that a contract technical assistant has tested preliminary positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

He resides in Yat Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate and was arranged for COVID-19 test since January 19. He was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday (January 22).

He worked at the Housing Authority Headquarters in Ho Man Tin. He last worked in the office on January 21. He did not have contact with members of the public recently while performing duties. He had been wearing masks and following relevant disease prevention measures at work.

The office has been fully cleaned and sterilised in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP).

The Housing Department will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP and co-operate with its disease prevention measures and quarantine work.

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Kwai Chung and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice (2)

The Government yesterday (January 22) 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 10.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Chin Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate) 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 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 building for more than two hours from January 13, 2022 to January 22, 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 January 24, 2022. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 4.30pm today (January 23) 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 6pm today.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the Eastern District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Department of Health and the Housing Department mobilised around 220 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including canned food, instant noodles and corn kernels, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing.

The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

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 4.30pm 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 6pm. Test records of around 750 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked. Nine persons were found not having undergone compulsory testing and compulsory testing orders were 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 145 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 enforces "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (with photo)

The Government yesterday (January 22) 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 10.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Chin Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate) were 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. In addition, the Government had issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the building for more than two hours from January 13, 2022 to January 22, 2022 to undergo compulsory testing on or before January 24, 2022 even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 4.30pm today (January 23) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 4.30pm today, persons in the "restricted area" in Kwai Chung who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results or wear wristbands as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 2.30am today. As at 2.30am today, around 370 residents had undergone testing, among which one case tested preliminarily positive was found. The case tested preliminarily positive will be followed up by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health accordingly.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 800 households, among which around 145 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

The Government also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or by other means yesterday. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing yesterday, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/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 may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.



Fatal traffic accident in Pat Heung

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Pat Heung this morning (January 23) in which a 23-year-old man died.

At about 7.07am, a private car driven by the 23-year-old man was travelling along Route Twisk towards Pat Heung, when approaching near Tai Mo Shan Country Park, it reportedly lost control and rammed into a lamp post.

The driver was trapped inside the compartment and was rescued by firemen. Sustaining serious head injuries, he was rushed to Yan Chai Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 10.15am.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team 1 of Traffic, New Territories North is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 3800.