

# 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 (with photos)

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 8pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Hiu Kwai House, Yuk Kwai House and Nga Kwai House in 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 buildings 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 completed the compulsory testing exercise at Hiu Kwai House, Yuk Kwai House and Nga Kwai House at around 9.45am today (January 23) and carried out enforcement action in the "restricted area" to verify that 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 12 noon today.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the North District Office, the Yuen Long District Office and the Wong Tai Sin District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office of the Department of Health, the Civil Service Bureau, the Highways Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Lands Department, the Education Bureau, the Transport Department, the Architectural Services Department and the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency mobilised more than 700 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

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. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at Hiu Kwai House, Yuk Kwai House and Nga Kwai House at around 9.45am today and took enforcement action in the "restricted area" to verify that 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 12 noon. Test records of around 1 350 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked at Hiu Kwai House, Yuk Kwai House and Nga Kwai House. A total of around 70 persons at Hiu Kwan House and Nga Kwai House 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 total of about 360 households of Hiu Kwai House, Yuk Kwai House and Nga Kwai House 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.



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## Latest arrangements for postal services in Kwai Chung Estate and Kwai Fuk Court

Hongkong Post announced today (January 23) that in view of the epidemic situation in Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung Post Office and mail delivery services to Kwai Chung Estate (including the Kwai Chung Estate iPostal Station) and Kwai Fuk Court will be temporarily suspended from January 24 to 27.

Members of the public can have access to postal services at the post offices in the vicinity, including Kwai Fong Post Office or Kwai Shing Post Office. As a result of the above arrangements, delivery services for mails addressed to the above area will be subject to delay. Hongkong Post apologises for the inconvenience caused.

Hongkong Post will continue to implement measures on social distancing and infection control at all postal facilities to safeguard the health of staff and the public.

For enquiry on the arrangement to the counter and delivery services mentioned above, members of the public may call the Hongkong Post enquiry hotline at 2921 2222.

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## **Hamster surrendered by citizen tested positive for COVID-19 virus**

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (January 23) announced that a hamster surrendered by a member of the public tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.

An AFCD spokesman said, "During the period from January 17 to 22, the AFCD collected 1 793 animal samples for COVID-19 virus tests. Samples were collected from hamsters surrendered by members of the public, hamsters and small animals collected from all pet shops in Hong Kong selling hamsters and a warehouse in Tai Po. All the tests have been completed. Results show that among the 113 samples taken from hamsters surrendered by members of the public, two samples drawn from a hamster collected on January 19 tested positive. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP), Department of Health was notified of the above results for their follow-up."

"Out of the 125 samples taken by the AFCD earlier on from a pet shop, Little Boss in Causeway Bay under the I Love Rabbit group, seven samples drawn from seven hamsters tested positive. Separately, out of the 49 samples collected from another outlet in Causeway Bay under the same group, two samples from two hamsters also tested positive. As for the 511 samples taken from the warehouse in Tai Po, one sample from a hamster also tested positive. The CHP was also notified of the results for their follow-up," the spokesman continued.

He noted that 77 hamsters had been surrendered to the AFCD as at January 22 and COVID-19 tests had been conducted on 71 of them. The AFCD will continue to conduct COVID-19 testing on the hamsters surrendered.

Furthermore, 34 environmental swabs taken earlier on from the group's three outlets in Mong Kok, three outlets in Causeway Bay, an outlet in Tai Po, an outlet in Yuen Long, and a boarding establishment in Causeway Bay as well as the Tai Po warehouse were also tested positive by the CHP.

As at January 22, a total of 2 512 animals, including 2 229 hamsters, were humanely dispatched.

Import of all small mammals (including hamsters) has already been banned. The department is also reviewing the quarantine requirements for importing this type of animals into Hong Kong in future, including considering imposing a requirement for animals concerned to undergo testing

for the COVID-19 virus prior to departure by the exporting country or region and to be tested again upon arrival in Hong Kong.

In view of the fact that a hamster surrendered by a member of the public tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, the spokesman strongly advises members of the public again to surrender to the department as soon as possible their hamsters purchased in local pet shops on or after December 22, 2021 for humane dispatch.

For the arrangement of surrendering hamsters to the department, please call 2691 2269. Members of the public can also send their hamsters to the New Territories South Animal Management Centre of the AFCD.

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

A Customs Officer has preliminarily tested positive for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). He visited a warehouse of a chain retailer and had contact with a warehouse staff member when participating in the investigation of a case involving cannabidiol products containing tetrahydro-cannabinol on January 20. The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) learned that the warehouse staff member has tested positive for COVID-19 last night (January 22). The Customs Officer also felt unwell and sought medical treatment at a hospital. He was notified to have preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 this morning (January 23).

The officer attended a press conference held by C&ED yesterday. He has no travel history in the past 14 days. He has been wearing surgical masks when performing duties. His last working day was January 22. Being under medical treatment in hospital, the officer is in stable condition.

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

- (1) While awaiting further assessment and recommendation by the Department of Health (DH), C&ED has promptly informed all reporters who had attended the press conference;
- (2) All departmental staff who might have been in contact with the Customs Officer concerned will be arranged to undergo COVID-19 test as soon as possible today;
- (3) The department has made arrangements to undergo cleaning and sterilisation at the concerned working places;
- (4) All officers have been further reminded to reduce social contact to



minimise risks of infection, and to pay attention to personal hygiene. If feeling unwell, they should consult a doctor and report the case immediately; and

(5) C&ED has flexibly deployed manpower to ensure provision of services remains unaffected.

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

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## **Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of Yuk Kwai House in specified “restricted area” in Kwai Chung**

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 8pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Hiu Kwai House, Yuk Kwai House and Nga Kwai House in 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 Yuk Kwai House of the "restricted area" at around 9.45am today (January 23) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in Yuk Kwai House to verify that people in Yuk Kwai House have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 9.45am today, persons in Yuk Kwai House of 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 1am today. As at 1am today, around 1 820 residents of Yuk Kwai House had undergone testing, among which one case tested preliminarily positive was found. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will arrange to follow up.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 800 households of Yuk Kwai House, among which around 100 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

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.