

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of Nga 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 Nga Kwai House of the "restricted area" at around 9.45am today (January 23) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in Nga Kwai House to verify that people in Nga 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 Nga 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 1 840 residents and visitors of Nga Kwai House had undergone testing, among which two cases tested preliminarily positive were 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 Nga Kwai House, among which around 115 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.

Liquor Licensing Board to meet on Tuesday

The following is issued on behalf of the Liquor Licensing Board:

The Liquor Licensing Board (LLB) will meet on Tuesday (January 25) to consider four applications for renewal and transfer of liquor licences.

The applications are (not in order of discussion):

Hong Kong:

HANAYOI in Causeway Bay

Kowloon:

UNIVERSITY FRIEND ORGANIZATION LIMITED in Tsim Sha Tsui
"Sit Anywhere Noodles and Barbecue" in Ngau Chi Wan

New Territories:

BUM MEI SIN KITCHEN in Yuen Long

The meeting will be held at 9.45am in the conference room, Room 102, 1/F, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai. In response to the latest developments of COVID-19, to avoid the gathering of people in an enclosed environment and to safeguard the health of all participants, public seats will not be available for all open hearings of the LLB in the interim.

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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 2 300 residents and visitors of Hiu Kwai House had undergone testing. No cases tested positive were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 1 060 households of Hiu Kwai House, among which around 150 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.

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 95 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of four local cases / local-related cases, three import-related cases, one non-locally confirmed case who had stayed in Hong Kong and 22 cases tested preliminarily positive, 89 specified premises are included in the compulsory testing notice. In addition, given the environmental samples collected from a pet shop and warehouse were tested positive, two 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 the multiple tests on time as required. 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 Kwai Chung area have tested positive, four specified premises are included in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection's website via the following link: (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220122.pdf).

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.

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be further extended for one day.

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 Centre for Health Protection (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 22, there were around 20 000 booking places available for today (January 23) at the CTCs, and around 80 per cent and 89 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.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at several locations in Kwai Chung Estate (actual locations subject to on-site

arrangements) and re-open mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations to provide free services for persons subject to compulsory testing today. Details and the detailed service scope are in the Annex:

- Open area outside Yuk Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Badminton and basketball courts outside Luk Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Badminton and basketball courts outside Chin Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Open area next to Chau Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Volleyball court next to Chun Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Open area/ball court outside Pak Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Open area next to Tsz Kwai House or Yan Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate
- Open area outside Mei Yue House, Shek Yip Mei Estate
- Open area outside Tower 4, Bauhinia Garden, Tseung Kwan O
- Open area outside Block 3, Po Tin Estate, Tuen Mun
- Open area outside Block 2, Tsui Ning Garden, Tuen Mun

Separately, certain mobile specimen collection stations originally planned will cease operation today in order to tackle with the latest epidemic development. These mobile specimen collection stations are located at Handball court of Victoria Park, Causeway Bay Community Centre, Pik Long House of Shek Pai Wan Estate, Yue Kwong Road Sports Centre, Wong Chuk Hang Recreation Ground, Cheung Sha Wan Sports Centre, Cheung Sha Wan Playground, Lai Chi Kok Park entrance, Arthur Street Temporary Playground in Yau Ma Tei, Tsuen Nam Road in Tai Wai, Tai Po Community Centre, Kin Sang Community Hall in Tuen Mun and Hong Kwai House of Cheung Hong Estate.

Free testing service will be provided to persons subject to compulsory testing at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located at around 54 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:

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.

If a person subject to compulsory testing obtains a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner, proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, then he or she may choose to undergo testing via the following routes by providing a deep throat saliva sample:

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."

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority closely monitors the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.