

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Cheung Sha Wan

The Government today (January 20) 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 Cheung Sha Wan (i.e. Cheung Yan House, Cheung Sha Wan Estate, 9 Tonkin Street, Cheung Sha Wan, Kowloon. 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 21).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As a preliminary tested positive case who has lived in the abovementioned building was detected today, and the preliminary 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 has set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 12am tomorrow. Arrangements have been 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 7, 2022 to January 20, 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 22, 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, if the case involved carrying variants of concern suspected to be Omicron, persons who resided in the same building are required to undergo compulsory testing on days 2, 3, 4, 7, 12 and 19 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 Housing Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2327 2775) which has started 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.

[CHP investigates nine confirmed and](#)

five asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and updates classification of case 13072 and identifies 16 additional Omicron cases from previously announced cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 20) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 20, the CHP was investigating nine additional confirmed cases and five additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 14 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). In addition, among the earlier cases reported since January 1, there are 18 asymptomatic cases at the time of reporting changed to confirmed cases after hospital admission, while one case tested positive earlier (case 13032) turned out to be a re-positive case after investigation. This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 12 907 so far, while the figures for asymptomatic cases and re-positive cases recorded since January 1 are 185 and four respectively, i.e. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 096 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of four imported cases, seven cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases, one local case, and two possibly local-related case. Thirteen of the cases involve mutant strains, while the mutation test result of the remaining one case is pending. The patients comprise 10 males and four females, aged 1 to 59. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

The seven cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases are 13091 (14-year-old male who is a family member of case 13097 living together); 13092 (28-year-old male who is a close contact of case 13072); 13093 (58-year-old female who is a teacher at Delia Memorial School (Broadway), 80-86 Broadway, Mei Foo); 13097, 13098 and 13099 (three males aged between 11 and 16 who are close contacts of case 13079); and 13101 (12-year-old male who studies at Delia Memorial School (Broadway), 80-86 Broadway, Mei Foo). The two possibly local-related cases are 13090 (53-year-old male who works at the Cathay Pacific Cargo Terminal at Hong Kong International Airport and lives in Yat Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung, which is the same block as case 13085) and 13100 (1-year-old girl who visited her family member living in Yat Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung). The local case is 13088 (17-year-old male who studies at St Joseph's Anglo-Chinese School in Kwun Tong).

Also, after comparing the genetic sequencing, it was confirmed that the genomes of case 13072 were identical to the genomes of a case

epidemiologically linked with imported case earlier (case 13045). It was also found that case 13072 had a brief encounter with cases 13067 and 13069 (family members of case 13045) on January 14 at Mei Foo MTR Station. Case 13072 is thus reclassified from a local case to epidemiologically linked with imported case.

A total of 283 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 6 to 19). Seventy-three of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, four are local cases, two are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12999, 13028, 13036, 13037, 13044, 13051, 13056, 13063 to 13067 and 13069 to 13072 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 495 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, 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 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).

The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will 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. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures in the next two weeks, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This

would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

â€‹â€‹The spokesman for the CHP stressed, "The global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."

APEC holds Workshop cum Training on Retro-commissioning in Hong Kong via video conferencing (with photos)

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Workshop cum Training on Retro-commissioning (RCx) is being held in Hong Kong via video conference from today (January 20) to January 21.

Delivering the opening remarks, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, said Hong Kong would strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. The Government published the "Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050" last year, which outlined Hong Kong's decarbonisation strategies and targets.

He added that RCx is a cost-effective tool for reducing the overall electricity consumption of buildings, and bolstering the promotion of RCx is one of the tactics in accelerating low-carbon transition. Hong Kong is honoured to host the online APEC workshop cum training to foster the wider adoption of RCx, which can help drive member economies towards APEC's energy intensity reduction goal.

More than 100 experts and delegates from 11 APEC member economies are attending the workshop cum training to exchange knowledge on RCx. This initiative serves as a timely check on the energy performance of an existing building to identify energy saving potential for operational improvements. Through tuning and adjusting building services systems and equipment, optimal operation efficiency can be achieved, thus saving energy and reducing carbon emissions. The event is part of the APEC-funded project proposed by Hong Kong. The project aims to promote the importance of RCx by improving energy efficiency, which can help accelerate APEC's goal to reduce energy intensity by at least 45 per cent by 2035, with 2005 as the baseline year.

In his remarks, the Deputy Director (Regulatory Services) of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, Mr Raymond Poon, emphasised that Hong Kong would continue to play an important role in the promotion of RCx application and collaboration, as well as in the facilitation of energy efficiency enhancement using innovative and intelligent technologies. He invited all APEC member economies to work together to enhance the energy performance of buildings in contributing to APEC's energy intensity reduction goal.

The "Energy Saving Plan for Hong Kong's Built Environment 2015~2025+" promulgated by the Government in 2015 has set a target of reducing energy intensity by 40 per cent by 2025. So far, the energy intensity in Hong Kong has decreased by over 30 per cent. Hong Kong is one of the best performers in terms of reduction in energy intensity among APEC member economies. The Government has also set aggressive energy saving targets in the "Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050" published in 2021.



[Hong Kong Customs smashes illicit refuelling station \(with photo\)](#)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs today (January 20) smashed an illicit refuelling station in Yuen Long and seized about 4 100 litres of suspected illicit motor spirit with an estimated market value of about \$83,000 and a duty potential of about \$25,000.

During an anti-illicit fuel operation conducted in Hung Shui Kiu, Yuen Long, this morning, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit motor spirit and a batch of oil refilling apparatus inside a fenced area. A 46-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case was arrested on the scene.

The arrestee will be formally charged with illegal dealing with dutiable commodities.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, selling, buying or using illicit motor spirit commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years. Moreover, anyone convicted twice in connection with illicit oil offence would have their driving licence suspended for six months. Those convicted three or more times would have their driving licence suspended for more than six months.

Customs will continue to take enforcement action against illicit motor spirit activities.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit motor spirit activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Suspension of face-to-face classes of secondary schools until Chinese New Year](#)

The Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (January 20) that all secondary schools (including schools offering non-local curriculum) should suspend face-to-face classes and all on-campus activities on or before next Monday (January 24) until schools' Chinese New Year holidays, similar to the current arrangements for primary schools, kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres. Private schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") should suspend face-to-face classes at all class levels until February 7.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The epidemic situation in Hong Kong is getting severe recently with a number of confirmed cases of unknown sources. There have been invisible chains of transmission in the community. There have also been confirmed cases or preliminary confirmed cases identified in schools, resulting in compulsory testing and even quarantine of teachers and students. The EDB, after taking various factors into consideration, has made the above decision.

"As preparations for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination are now at a key stage, secondary schools may, with stringent anti-epidemic measures put in place, arrange Secondary Six students to return to schools for essential learning and assessment activities for no more than half a day. This arrangement also applies to the level of students of schools offering non-local curriculum and sitting for public examinations this year. For other class levels, schools should cancel or postpone on-campus examinations or other activities held in school premises.

"During the period of face-to-face class suspension, schools will flexibly deploy various teaching modes to sustain students' learning at home. Schools should remain open to look after students who lack carers to take care of them at home. Schools will arrange for staff to be on duty to handle school affairs and answer parents' enquiries."

The spokesman continued, "Schools should remind parents to follow anti-epidemic measures and pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. Parents should avoid taking their children to crowded places with poor ventilation. During the period of face-to-face class suspension, schools should continue to maintain communication with parents and students to show care for the learning and emotional needs of the students, and render appropriate assistance to parents. Schools should also keep the school campuses clean and hygienic all the time. Schools are required to continue to strictly observe the health measures as stipulated in the 'Health Protection Measures for Schools' issued by the EDB and the 'Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of COVID-19' issued by the Centre for Health Protection."

The spokesman added, "The EDB will issue a letter to schools with details later today. We urge unvaccinated teachers and school staff, parents and students to get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves and their family members, and to construct a more effective protective barrier for both schools and the community."

The EDB will closely monitor the situation and move in step with the development of the overall anti-epidemic measures in Hong Kong. The bureau will further deliberate on the schooling arrangements for the period after schools' Chinese New Year holidays, and plans to make the relevant announcement by the end of this month.