

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Aberdeen and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice

The Government yesterday (January 18) 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 6.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Aberdeen (i.e. Ka Sing House (Block A), Ka Lung Court, 33 Tin Wan Praya Road, Aberdeen) 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 8, 2022 to January 18, 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 20, 2022. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 6.30am today (January 19) 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 8.30am today.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the Southern District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Department of Health mobilised around 130 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

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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. One box of masks was also provided to each person subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

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

testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Lai Chi Kok (with photo)

The Government yesterday (January 18) 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 7pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Lai Chi Kok (i.e. 72-74 Broadway, Mei Foo Sun Chuen Phase 3, Lai Chi Kok) 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 5, 2022 to January 18, 2022 to undergo compulsory testing on or before January 20, 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 7am today (January 19) 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 7am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Lai Chi Kok 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 12am today. As at 12am today, around 370 residents had undergone testing. No cases tested positive were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 130 households, among which around 10 households did not answer the door. Those may include some households undergoing quarantine or isolation. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and 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 enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tung Chung (with photo)

The Government yesterday (January 18) 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 7pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tung Chung (i.e. Monterey Cove Tower 1, Caribbean Coast Phase 1, 2 Kin Tung Road, Tung Chung) 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 10, 2022 to January 18, 2022 to undergo compulsory testing on or before January 20, 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 6.30am today (January 19) 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 6.30am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Tung 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 865 residents had undergone testing. No cases tested positive were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 375 households, among which around 55 households did not answer the door. Those may include some households undergoing quarantine or isolation. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and 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 enforces "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory

testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Aberdeen (with photo)

The Government yesterday (January 18) 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 6.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Aberdeen (i.e. Ka Sing House (Block A), Ka Lung Court, 33 Tin Wan Praya Road, Aberdeen) 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 8, 2022 to January 18, 2022 to undergo compulsory testing on or before January 20, 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 6.30am today (January 19) 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 6.30am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Aberdeen 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 11pm yesterday. As at 11pm yesterday, around 880 residents had undergone testing. No cases tested positive were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 350 households, among which around 25 households did not answer the door. Those may include some households undergoing quarantine or isolation. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and 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.



[Hamster samples preliminarily test positive for COVID-19 virus](#)

In view of samples collected from hamsters from a pet shop that preliminarily tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) announced on January 18 that all animals in Little Boss, a pet shop in Causeway Bay, and its warehouse in Tai Po will be humanely dispatched to minimise the potential risks of COVID-19 infection and safeguard public safety. Furthermore, all pet shops in Hong Kong selling hamsters must suspend business starting from yesterday. Hamsters from those pet shops will also be taken for COVID-19 tests and humane dispatch, while other animals of those pet shops need to undergo testing for the COVID-19 virus. Pet shops can resume operation when satisfactory test results are returned. The AFCD has also suspended the import of small mammals with immediate effect, and strongly advise members of the public to surrender their hamsters purchased in local pet shops on or after December 22, 2021, to the department for humane dispatch.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The AFCD received a report by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), Department of Health on January 17 that a pet shop worker was confirmed to be infected with COVID-19. AFCD staff were sent to the pet shop where she worked for investigation and collected samples from 78 hamsters, chinchillas and rabbits for COVID-19 tests. Up till now, 11 samples collected from hamsters preliminarily tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, while the test results of other animals were negative."

"In addition, the AFCD also collected 511 samples from chinchillas, guinea pigs, hamsters and rabbits in the warehouse of the pet shop in Tai Po

on January 17. COVID-19 testing is underway. It is learned that some of the environmental swabs collected by the CHP tested positive for the COVID-19 virus," he added.

The spokesman noted that apart from Little Boss, the pet shop in Causeway Bay, hamsters are sold in 34 other local pet shops. All small mammals other than hamsters (including chinchillas, guinea pigs and rabbits) in these shops have to undergo testing for the COVID-19 virus. These shops may resume business when test results are found satisfactory. Thorough disinfection and cleaning should be carried out in these pet shops during the period.

The AFCD has suspended the import of all small mammals (including hamsters) with immediate effect. The department is also reviewing the quarantine requirements for importing this type of animals into Hong Kong, including considering making it 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.

According to AFCD's records, two consignments of hamsters were imported into Hong Kong on December 22 last year and January 7 this year respectively. Upon consulting experts, the AFCD opined that the two consignments of hamsters have a higher risk of carrying the COVID-19 virus, while hamsters imported into Hong Kong beforehand is relatively less risky. Thus the AFCD strongly advises members of the public to surrender hamsters purchased in local pet shops on or after December 22 last year to the department for humane dispatch.

"As positive test results for the COVID-19 virus were found in a number of samples collected from hamsters, there is evidence that this batch of hamsters had been contaminated with the COVID-19 virus. Overseas studies show that once hamsters have been infected with COVID-19 in a laboratory environment, the virus can effectively multiply and be transmitted within the herd of hamsters, thus significantly increasing the risk of spreading the virus as well as transmitting the virus to humans and other animals. Onset of symptoms may not be triggered immediately after the hamsters have been infected, negative test results do not necessarily mean that the hamsters have not been infected. Moreover, testing over a thousand hamsters everyday is beyond the testing capacity of the authorities and keeping hamsters may also bring risks to animal keepers. Regarding multiplication and mutual infection of the virus, as well as the large number of hamsters involved, the AFCD does not have sufficient facilities and feasible means to isolate every single one of them and conduct tests for them repeatedly. Humane dispatch of all hamsters involved is a safe and feasible way to control the epidemic. European countries like the Netherlands and Denmark also mounted large-scale humane dispatch operations over cases of transmission of the virus from mink to humans in 2020," the spokesman said.

He also pointed out that animals of the relevant pet shop will be distributed to different branches for sale, thus tracing and identification of the import dates of different consignments within a short time is difficult. Humanely dispatching hamsters on a selective basis could not

control the epidemic completely and may cause loopholes. To protect members of the public and safeguard public health, it is necessary for the AFCD to humanely dispatch those consignments of hamsters as soon as possible, to prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading further.

The spokesman stressed, "In consideration of public health and animal welfare, the AFCD appeals to members of the public that they should abandon their pets on the streets in no circumstances. For the arrangement of taking in hamsters by the department, please call 2691 2269. Members of the public may also send their hamsters to the New Territories South Animal Management Centre."

The spokesman reminded pet owners to adopt good hygiene practices (including hand washing before and after being around or handling animals, their food or supplies, as well as avoiding kissing them) and to maintain a clean and hygienic household environment. People who have taken ill should restrict contact with animals. If any changes in the health condition of pets are spotted, advice from a veterinarian should be sought as soon as possible. Members of the public raising hamsters should keep them at home.