

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

In view of four possibly import-related cases, 18 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.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are in Annex 1.

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 9, there were around 18 000 booking places available for today (January 10) at the CTCs, and around 80 per cent availability for booking places for the coming seven days. 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 or re-open mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations today for persons subject to compulsory testing, details of the service scope are in Annex 2:

- Ming Wah Dai Ha, Shau Kei Wan
- Tower 10, Park Avenue, Tai Kok Tsui
- On Hing Playground on On Hing Street, Yuen Long (open until January 14)
- Shun Yat House, Yat Tung II Estate, Tung Chung

Free testing service will be provided to persons subject to compulsory testing at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located at 52 places in various districts today. The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. Persons subject to compulsory testing and those 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 Annex 2.

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."

[Latest development of incident involving officials' attendance at banquet](#)

A Government spokesperson today (January 9) said that, from among the cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus announced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today, one more person was found to have turned up at the banquet attended by various Government officials in the evening on January 3. For prudence, the 11 relevant Government officials with the quarantine orders lifted yesterday (January 8) will have to undergo home isolation using their own vacation leave and undergo multiple compulsory tests before resuming work.

The CHP of the DH yesterday said that, upon further investigation, the case previously tested positive that involved a 53-year-old woman having attended the above-mentioned banquet from 6pm to 8pm on January 3 is not a case of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection. It thus lifted the quarantine orders of those having left the banquet before 9.30pm that day, including 11 Government officials in total (i.e. seven Politically Appointed Officials and the Commissioner of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, two heads of departments who are civil servants, and one directorate civil servant who later informed the CHP of his attendance at the banquet).

The other three officials who attended the banquet after 9.30pm that day (i.e. the Secretary for Home Affairs, the Director of Immigration and the Political Assistant to the Secretary for Development) will continue to undergo quarantine in the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre.

The Government spokesperson said that as the CHP of the DH is still following up the case tested preliminarily positive as announced today, to minimise the risk of possible transmission, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, has instructed the above-mentioned 11 Government officials to continue to undergo home isolation using their own vacation leave and undergo testing on January 10, 15 and 22 in accordance with the requirements of the compulsory testing notice issued by the CHP on January 7. They will resume duties after all the test results are confirmed to be negative. In the interim, the posting arrangements previously announced will continue to be in force to ensure that the daily operation of the Government will not be affected.

The Government spokesperson reiterated that the concerted efforts of the whole society are needed to fight the virus and that Government officials should lead by example, abide by the rules, stay vigilant and refrain from taking part in high-risk activities. On the instruction of the Chief Executive, the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, and the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, are conducting investigations into the relevant officials' behaviours of attending the banquet. After the investigations are completed, the Chief Executive will take appropriate actions against the relevant officials in an impartial manner.

CHP reminds relevant residents to comply with "restriction-testing declaration" operation on two cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 9) reminded members of the public that "restriction-testing declaration" (RTD) have been made for the residences of two of the cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus the CHP is following. The CHP strongly reminds relevant residents that they must comply with the RTD operations. 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 RTD is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The first case involves a 20-year-old female patient living in Tower 8, Aegean Coast, Tuen Mun. She worked as a part-time salesperson at the SOGO Causeway Bay Store and she last went to work on December 28, 2021. As the place was included in a compulsory testing notice on January 5, she went to a community testing centre on January 8 for test in accordance with the relevant compulsory testing notice and tested preliminarily positive. She developed sore throat and runny nose the same day. She also works at Tung Ah Dispensary, H.A.N.D.S, Tuen Mun.

Initial investigation revealed that she had not received COVID-19 vaccination. She has no recent travel history and has not visited any places where cases tested positive appeared. The CHP has so far not found any close contacts between the case and other recent cases tested positive, and is now investigating the places where the patient visited in the past 21 days in order to ascertain the infection source and to terminate the silent transmission chains in the community.

The second case involves a 43-year-old female patient living in Tower 2, Harbour Green. Investigation of the CHP revealed that the patient had meal with case 12838 before they attended a gathering at Reserva Ibérica Tapas Bar & Restaurant, Shop 10, 1/F, Causeway Centre, 28 Harbour Road, Wan Chai in the evening on January 3 together. She went to a community testing centre on January 8 for test in accordance with the relevant compulsory testing notice and tested preliminarily positive. She has been asymptomatic. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on March 23 and April 20, 2021 in Hong Kong.

The Government has made "restriction-testing declaration" tonight for the buildings where the patients resided (Tower 8, Aegean Coast, 2 Kwun Tsing Road, Castle Peak Road – So Kwun Wat, Tuen Mun and Tower 2, Harbour Green, 8 Sham Mong Road, Tai Kok Tsui) and persons who resided or worked at the buildings will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where they had visited during the incubation periods will also be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

The spokesman for the CHP said, "The Government has remained vigilant and has been closely monitoring the latest scientific data on mutant strains as well as the epidemic situation of various places. The most stringent anti-epidemic measures will be implemented to prevent the mutant strains from spreading in the local community."

At the moment, the adverse impact on the epidemic situation caused by the newly emerged mutant strains is not fully known yet, but vaccination is still essential to prevent severe cases and deaths from COVID-19 infection. The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of

the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk). The CHP also urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk, to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 9), 41 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12465, 12466, 12469, 12472, 12478, 12479, 12480, 12481, 12485, 12486, 12490, 12491, 12499, 12500, 12503, 12505, 12507, 12509, 12513, 12515, 12516, 12521, 12522, 12525, 12528, 12530, 12534, 12535, 12537, 12538, 12539, 12545, 12546, 12547, 12563, 12566, 12567, 12580, 12587, 12589 and 12819) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 284 patients have been discharged.

A total of 368 patients who had tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre, the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo and public hospital. All of them are in stable condition.

The HA will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates 16 confirmed and 17 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and identifies 25 additional Omicron cases from previously announced cases

(DH) today (January 9) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 9, the CHP was investigating 16 additional confirmed cases and 17 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 33 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). This brings a total number of confirmed cases to 12 786 so far and starting from January 1 recorded 149 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 12 935 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 27 imported cases, five cases epidemiologically linked with imported case and one possibly import-related case. Thirty of the cases involved mutant strains, mutation test results of two cases are pending, while the viral load of the remaining case is insufficient for mutation test. The patients comprise 17 males and 16 females, aged 11-month-old to 71. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

The five cases epidemiologically linked with imported case are 12909 (13-year-old girl who is a household contact of case 12854), 12910 (42-year-old female who is a household contact of case 12854), 12911 (3-year-old boy who is a family member of case 12821 and had breakfast at Six Garden Restaurant with case 12821 on December 31, 2021), 12913 (71-year-old female who visited the workplace of cases 12825 and 12880 on January 3) and 12916 (3-year-old boy who is a household contact of case 12903). The possibly import-related case is 12908 (39-year-old female who is a part-time cabin cleaning worker at the Hong Kong International Airport). Details of cases 12908, 12911 and 12913 have been announced yesterday (January 8) (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/08/P2022010800739.htm).

A total of 321 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 26, 2021, to January 8, 2022). Thirty of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, one is a local case, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12751, 12752, 12771 to 12774, 12777 to 12780, 12786, 12787, 12791 to 12794, 12797, 12838 to 12840, 12854, 12860, 12872, 12873 and 12875 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 265 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, as the passenger flight (SQ007) operated by Singapore Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from San Francisco, the United States of America, on January 7, 2022 had eight passengers who tested positive upon arrival, and the passenger flight (NH811) operated by All Nippon Airways arriving in Hong Kong from Tokyo, Japan, on January 7, 2022 had six passengers who tested positive upon arrival, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit the landing of passenger flights in Hong Kong from San Francisco operated by Singapore Airlines and from Tokyo operated by All Nippon Airways from January 9 to 22, 2022.

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 that 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 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 gathering (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€‹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)."