

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Tuen Mun

The Government today (January 9) 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 Tuen Mun (i.e. Tower 8, Aegean Coast, 2 Kwun Tsing Road, Castle Peak Road – So Kwun Wat, Tuen Mun. 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 6.30am tomorrow (January 10).

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 will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 12am tomorrow. Arrangements will be 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 6.30am 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 4, 2022 to January 9, 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 11, 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, persons who resided in the same building as the preliminary tested positive case carrying variant of concern suspected to be Omicron 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 Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which starts 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.

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testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Tai Kok Tsui

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Government tightens boarding and quarantine requirements for places with Omicron cases detected

â€‹The Government announced today (January 9) that in view of the latest global developments of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Solomon Islands will be specified as a Group A specified place from 0.00am on January 12 to

tighten the boarding and quarantine requirements for relevant inbound travellers.

To manage and prevent the importation risks posed by Omicron cases, the Government continues to employ the most stringent measures to guard against importation of cases. Overseas places where Omicron cases have been detected that may lead to local transmission and exportation of cases will be specified as Group A specified places. Noting that the detection of Omicron cases was confirmed in Solomon Islands, the Government will specify it as a Group A specified place from 0.00am on January 12. Non-Hong Kong residents who have stayed there within 21 days will not be allowed to enter Hong Kong. Hong Kong residents can only board a flight for Hong Kong if they have been fully vaccinated and hold a recognised vaccination record. They will have to undergo compulsory quarantine in a designated quarantine hotel for 21 days upon returning to Hong Kong, with six tests to be conducted during quarantine, followed by compulsory testing in a community testing centre on the 26th day of arrival in Hong Kong.

Details on the relevant boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for respective specified places can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html.

The Government will gazette the relevant updated specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to effect the above measures.

Eight CTCs extend service hours to 10pm today

The Government announced today (January 9) that the eight community testing centres (CTCs) stated below will extend service hours until 10pm today to meet the testing demand. Members of the public can walk in to undergo testing.

- Kowloon East: Yau Tong Community Hall, Ngau Tau Kok Road Sports Centre in Kwun Tong
- Kowloon West: To Kwa Wan Sports Centre in Kowloon City, Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
- New Territories East: Tai Wo Sports Centre in Tai Po, Wo Hing Community Hall in Fanling
- New Territories West: Siu Lun Community Hall in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long Town East Community Hall

Apart from CTCs (www.communitytest.gov.hk), members of the public may also visit mobile specimen collection stations in various districts (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/station/) for testing.

The Government reminds again that persons subject to compulsory testing and those received the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health should undergo free testing as soon as possible.

Statement by USHA

The following statement is issued by the Under Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, today (January 9):

On January 3, I briefly attended a banquet and departed shortly after 7pm. When entering the venue, I used the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app and presented my vaccination record of taking three doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

I have been tested negative for COVID-19. I am no longer required to undergo quarantine and have already resumed normal work.

I should not attend the banquet when the pandemic situation was still serious. I hereby express my apology for lack of sensitivity. I have learnt a lesson and will be more vigilant in future.