

## Labour Department reminds foreign domestic helpers subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing as soon as possible and comply with social distancing measures

The Labour Department (LD) today (January 7) reminded foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to take note of and comply with the compulsory testing notice (CTN) to undergo free COVID-19 testing on time and appealed them to comply with social distancing measures announced by the Government.

An LD spokesman said, "According to the CTNs issued by the Government, any persons who had been present at the specified places during the specified date(s) and time period(s) should undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The above compulsory testing requirement also applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The LD has disseminated the latest information to FDHs through various channels, including consulates-general of FDH-sending countries in Hong Kong, FDH and employer groups and employment agency associations, etc. The LD calls on employers to remind FDHs who had been present at specified places during the specified date(s) and time period(s) to undergo testing. FDHs can undergo the tests at community testing centres or mobile specimen collection stations. Details of the compulsory testing can be found in the Government's announcements ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html))."

The Government will strictly enforce the CTN. Any person who fails to comply with the CTN 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 would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman continued, "According to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I), a person who participates in a prohibited group gathering of more than four persons in public places or fails to wear a mask in accordance with the requirement may be charged a fixed penalty of \$5,000. During the Sundays in January, the LD will, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, conduct mobile broadcasts in multiple languages at popular FDH gathering places, including Central, Tamar Park in Admiralty, Victoria Park in Causeway Bay, Lai Chi Kok Park, etc. to call upon FDHs to comply with the relevant requirements. Relevant departments will take enforcement action against those who still refuse to abide by the regulations after repeated reminders."

"We remind FDHs to strictly observe the requirements and appeal to them to avoid gatherings (including in boarding facilities), food sharing and other social activities on their rest days and holidays and stay at home for rest as far as possible in order to safeguard their personal health and reduce the risk of infection. We also encourage employers and FDHs to discuss rest day arrangements, so as to minimise the health risk of participating in social activities."

Employers are reminded that they must not compel their FDHs to work on a rest day. An employer who compels his or her FDH to work on a rest day without the agreement of the FDH, or fails to grant rest days to the FDH, is in breach of the Employment Ordinance and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000.

Besides, according to Clause 3 of the Standard Employment Contract (SEC), all FDHs working in Hong Kong must work and reside in the employer's residence during their employment period. If an employer breaches the above Clause and/or fails to provide the FDH with free, suitable and furnished accommodation, it will be one of the factors in the Immigration Department (ImmD)'s consideration of the employer's future applications for employing an FDH. The adverse record may lead to any such application being refused. Further, in case employers and/or FDHs knowingly furnish a false representation/statement to immigration officers in the course of a visa application, including the intended accommodation arrangement, they may be subject to criminal investigation and prosecution of the relevant offence.

Hong Kong residents, including FDHs, can get vaccinated for COVID-19 free of charge. For booking and details, please visit the designated website of the Vaccination Programme ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)). The Government appeals to FDHs to get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves and others.

Should FDHs and their employers have any enquiries on employment matters, they may contact the LD through the dedicated FDH hotline at 2157 9537 (manned by 1823), by email to [fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk](mailto:fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk) or through the online form on the dedicated portal ([www.fdh.labour.gov.hk](http://www.fdh.labour.gov.hk)).

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## **Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Ho Man Tin**

The Government today (January 7) 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 7.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Ho Man Tin (i.e. Block B, The Crescent, 13 Ho Man Tin Hill Road, Ho Man Tin. 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 7.30am tomorrow (January 8).

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 10pm today. 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 7.30am 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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from January 5 to January 7, 2022, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not

required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, 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 December 25, 2021 to January 7, 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 9, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons 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 7.30pm 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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## **Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Happy Valley**

â€‹The Government today (January 7) 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 7.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred

to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Happy Valley (i.e. Yuk Sing Building, 1-9 Yuk Sau Street, Happy Valley, excluding the shops at G/F of Yuk Sing Building. 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 8).

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 arrange dedicated staff to collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11.30pm tonight. 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 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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from January 5, 2022 to January 7, 2022, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, 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 1, 2022 to January 7, 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 9, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons 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 7.30pm 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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## [Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Wan Chai](#)

The Government today (January 7) 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 Wan Chai (i.e. Lee Shun Building, 157-159 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai. 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 8).

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 arrange dedicated staff to collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 12am tomorrow. 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 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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from January 5, 2022 to January 7, 2022, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, 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 December 27, 2021 to January 7, 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 9, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons 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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## **Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected scheduled red sandalwood (with photo)**

Hong Kong Customs seized a total of about 4 120 kilograms of suspected scheduled red sandalwood, with an estimated market value of about \$20.7 million, at Hong Kong International Airport yesterday (January 6) and today (January 7).

Through risk assessment, Customs officers yesterday inspected an air consignment, declared to be carrying furniture parts, arriving in Hong Kong from Dubai. Upon inspection, Customs officers found about 1 090kg of suspected scheduled red sandalwood, with an estimated market value of about \$5.45 million, inside one large wooden box.

Also, through risk assessment, Customs officers today inspected an air consignment, declared to be carrying decoration raw materials, arriving in Hong Kong from Toronto. Upon inspection, Customs officers found about 3 030kg of suspected scheduled red sandalwood, with an estimated market value of about \$15.25 million, inside two large wooden boxes.

The two cases were handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for follow-up investigation.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting an endangered



species without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years.

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

