

# [Public hospitals tighten testing requirements for compassionate visits](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

To further strengthen infection control measures to prevent nosocomial infections, the Hospital Authority (HA) today (January 6) announced tightened testing requirements for compassionate visits beginning tomorrow (January 7).

"For compassionate visits under emergency situations, such as visiting the critically ill or end-of-life visits, visitors must provide a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result obtained within 48 hours or a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test result obtained within 24 hours before the visit. If the visitor cannot arrange the test in advance, a COVID-19 rapid antigen test must be performed and the test result must be provided right after the visit," an HA spokesperson said.

"As for pre-arranged compassionate visits under other specific circumstances, visitors must have completed two-dose COVID-19 vaccination for 14 days, and provide either a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result obtained within 48 hours or provide a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test result obtained within 24 hours."

The HA announced earlier that all public hospitals will suspend special visit arrangements in the coming two weeks. The HA hopes the patients' family members can understand the limitations of the visiting arrangements under the current epidemic situation. All hospitals will continue to facilitate video visiting as far as practicable.

The spokesperson reiterated that all visitors entering public hospitals are required to strictly comply with the infection control measures, such as wearing surgical masks, temperature checking and filling in health declaration forms. In addition, visitors need to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code when entering public hospitals, except for exempted persons (persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, those with disabilities that render use of the app difficult and individual persons granted exemptions due to actual circumstances can complete a record form as registration).

---

## [Public hospitals tighten testing](#)

# requirements for compassionate visits

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

To further strengthen infection control measures to prevent nosocomial infections, the Hospital Authority (HA) today (January 6) announced tightened testing requirements for compassionate visits beginning tomorrow (January 7).

"For compassionate visits under emergency situations, such as visiting the critically ill or end-of-life visits, visitors must provide a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result obtained within 48 hours or a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test result obtained within 24 hours before the visit. If the visitor cannot arrange the test in advance, a COVID-19 rapid antigen test must be performed and the test result must be provided right after the visit," an HA spokesperson said.

"As for pre-arranged compassionate visits under other specific circumstances, visitors must have completed two-dose COVID-19 vaccination for 14 days, and provide either a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result obtained within 48 hours or provide a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test result obtained within 24 hours."

The HA announced earlier that all public hospitals will suspend special visit arrangements in the coming two weeks. The HA hopes the patients' family members can understand the limitations of the visiting arrangements under the current epidemic situation. All hospitals will continue to facilitate video visiting as far as practicable.

The spokesperson reiterated that all visitors entering public hospitals are required to strictly comply with the infection control measures, such as wearing surgical masks, temperature checking and filling in health declaration forms. In addition, visitors need to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code when entering public hospitals, except for exempted persons (persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, those with disabilities that render use of the app difficult and individual persons granted exemptions due to actual circumstances can complete a record form as registration).

---

## Service adjustments for some franchised bus routes

The Transport Department (TD) said today (January 6) that, to align with the Government's announcement of the tightened social distancing measures

yesterday (January 5) with a view to reducing public traffic, social functions and crowd gatherings to the greatest extent, which serve to curb the spread of the virus in the community, Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB), New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB) and Citybus Limited have submitted applications to the TD for temporary service adjustments for some bus routes after reviewing their operations and services to cope with the decreasing passenger demand and better utilise resources.

The TD has examined the applications taking into account factors such as the impact of the proposed service adjustments on passenger waiting time, efficient use of bus resources deployment and public acceptability of the proposed frequency adjustments, and made reference to the extent of the TD's previously approved temporary service adjustments for bus routes related to similar tightening social distancing measures, and has approved the following bus companies to adjust the frequencies of a total of 341 routes after 8pm from tomorrow (January 7) to January 20. The details are as follows:

Bus company	No. of routes approved for frequency adjustments
KMB	226
NWFB	40
Citybus (except airport and North Lantau routes)	46
KMB/NWFB jointly operated	16
KMB/Citybus jointly operated	13
Total	341

Among the routes approved for frequency adjustments, the headway before 8pm (during peak and off-peak periods) will remain unchanged while the headway after 8pm in general will be lengthened by no more than 10 minutes, and the extended headway will not exceed 30 minutes. The TD has requested the bus companies to closely monitor the change in passenger demand and consider strengthening services whenever necessary, and to allow more space for passengers if resources permit.

The service adjustments for the relevant bus routes have been approved for a period of 14 days. The TD will consider the actual circumstances to review the service adjustments, and keep close communication with the bus companies to closely monitor the operational situation and adjust the services according to passenger demand.

In addition, the frequencies of individual bus routes mainly serving tourists and heading to land boundary control points and the airport have already been adjusted to limited service or have service suspended due to the enhanced anti-epidemic measures on boundary control implemented earlier.

---

## Government formulates pest control work plan for this year

The inter-departmental Pest Control Steering Committee (PCSC) had a meeting today (January 6) via video conferencing to review the effectiveness of anti-rodent and anti-mosquito work of the previous year, and to formulate the pest control work plan for this year.

### Review of work in 2021

Representatives of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) reported at the meeting that relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) have met various work targets on mosquito and rodent control laid down by the PCSC in early 2021. The trend of the mosquito surveillance index of 2021 was under control, and the situation of mosquito proliferation was broadly the same as that in 2020. The overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) has improved, with 3.1 per cent in 2021 as compared with 3.6 per cent in 2020. The number of survey locations with an RIR at Level 2 (meaning rodent infestation was slightly extensive) dropped to three from seven in 2020.

The meeting also reviewed the enhancement measures on pest control by various B/Ds last year, including:

(1) Strengthening inter-departmental collaboration: The FEHD and other B/Ds set up a high-level liaison mechanism in June last year on mosquito control. The mechanism is triggered once the first phase Gravidtrap Index has continuously reached 20 per cent or above in respect of a survey area, such that more effective co-ordination on mosquito prevention and control operations among B/Ds can be made.

(2) Intensifying pest control operations: The FEHD conducted two rounds of anti-rodent operations in designated target areas throughout the city from May to June and from November to December 2021. The second round of the operations featured, for the first time, an enhanced version in Sham Shui Po, Wan Chai and Yuen Long. Under the enhanced version of the operations, the scope of rodent control was expanded, and large-scale and targeted anti-rodent operations were conducted in more rodent black spots such as public markets and municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, and rear lanes adjacent to food premises. During the two rounds of operations, the FEHD also strengthened the enforcement action for enhanced deterrent effect, including issuing fixed penalty notices to or making prosecutions against those who illegally disposed of refuse and waste. Rodent problems have been improved in the target areas concerned after the two rounds of operations.

The Housing Department (HD) implemented additional rodent control

measures in 80 selected priority estates in three batches last year. The first two batches were completed in end-October 2021. The HD and the FEHD/local stakeholders conducted about 120 joint inspections and some 130 joint cleaning operations. The third batch commenced in December 2021 and will end in February this year. The HD will continue to step up rodent prevention and control measures and enhance residents' awareness on hygiene.

(3) Applying technologies: Large robotics ultra-low volume foggers that can be mounted on vehicles have been introduced to facilitate the killing of adult mosquitoes in places that are difficult for workers to reach. In addition, thermal cameras have also been used, in places such as seven public rental housing estates, for monitoring rodent activities and planning anti-rodent operations.

As for other cleaning operations, the Home Affairs Department and its District Offices have been acting according to actual circumstances to assist buildings in need, including "three-nil" buildings (i.e. buildings which do not have owners' corporations or any form of residents' organisations, or do not engage the service of property management companies), via arrangements such as the District-led Actions Scheme. Through the provision of one-off cleaning services at common parts of these buildings, the effectiveness of good building management is demonstrated and the opportunity has also been taken to call on residents to maintain good environmental hygiene. In 2021, cleaning services were provided over 4 300 times for some 1 600 "three-nil" buildings in various districts.

#### Prospects on work in 2022

---

Looking ahead, each B/D agreed to continue the strategy of strengthening pest control work through inter-departmental collaboration, application of technology and community engagement. The meeting has set out a number of specific work targets. On mosquito prevention and control, the meeting agreed to set out targets including having no more than five survey areas with an Area Gravidtrap Index exceeding 20 per cent for two months or more, eliminating about 72 000 mosquito breeding places, and monitoring the density level of *Aedes albopictus* in each survey area using the Density Index. Targets for rodent control include increasing the poison treatments of rodent infestation to over 100 000 and rodent traps to over 86 000 across the city.

As regards inter-departmental collaboration, each B/D agreed to continue enhancing the cleaning work of different areas. The HD will again select 80 priority estates for implementing additional rodent control measures so as to enhance the hygiene of those estates as well as publicity and educational activities on rodent control and prevention. Before the rainy season, B/Ds shall reduce potential mosquito breeding sites, constantly update hotspot lists of mosquito proliferation and carry out fogging operations. The meeting reiterated that effective mosquito control requires the effort of all parties, and that all B/Ds must work together with the community in carrying out effective mosquito control measures.

Furthermore, the FEHD will continue to keep watch on any new project in the market, consult professionals, explore suitable technologies and study the feasibility of introducing and applying new technologies in the Government's pest control work. The FEHD will also share information with other B/Ds at appropriate junctures for enhancing the effectiveness of the work concerned.

On the community engagement front, relevant B/Ds will step up publicity and education campaigns, and enhance collaboration with district organisations on anti-mosquito operations for encouraging the public to keep the environment clean and eliminating the food sources of rodents. All these aim to have more effective promotion on the mosquito and rodent prevention and control work at the community level.

Representatives from three bureaux and 21 departments/organisations attended today's meeting.

---

## **Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in North Point**

â€‹The Government today (January 6) 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 7.05pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in North Point (i.e. Block 3, Phase 1, City Garden, 233 Electric Road, North Point, excluding the shops at G/F, 1/F and 2/F of Maxi Mall. 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 7).

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 12.30am 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 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 4, 2022 to January 6, 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 30, 2021 to January 6, 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 8, 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 7.05pm 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.