

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tai Wai (with photo)

The Government yesterday (January 3) 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 Tai Wai (i.e. Tower 2, Granville Garden, 18 Pik Tin Street, Tai Wai) 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 December 14, 2021 to January 3, 2022, to undergo compulsory testing on or before January 5, 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 4) 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 Tai Wai 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 660 residents had undergone testing. No tested positive cases were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 220 households, among which around 20 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 also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or

by other means. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from January 1, 2022 to January 3, 2022, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again.

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

In view of one imported case tested preliminarily positive and had stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation period and two possibly import-related cases, 21 specified premises visited by the cases 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.

Since there was an outbreak of upper respiratory tract infection and/or influenza-like illness in one school, and the symptoms of the diseases concerned are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the relevant school is covered in the compulsory testing notice. Persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the above compulsory testing notice are in Annex 1.

Furthermore, in order to cut any possible transmission chains in the community, any person who had been present at Moon Palace, Shop G25, Festival Walk, 80 Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong at any time during the period from 1pm to 3pm on December 27, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff and visitors), has to undergo testing on January 3 or January 4, 2022, and report the test result to the Centre for Health Protection by phone (2125 1111 / 2125 1122) as soon as possible and in any case no later than January 5, 2022 after receiving the SMS (mobile phone text message) notification containing the result of the test.

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 before the fifth wave strikes in Hong Kong.

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

). For prudence's sake, the above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

In accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, 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 3, there were around 31 000 booking places available for today (January 4) at the CTCs, and around 92 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:

- Tower 18 of Hong Kong Parkview, Tai Tam Reservoir Road
- Block 6 of Villa Athena in Ma On Shan
- Tennis court No. 1 of Royal Ascot in Fo Tan
- Tower 2 of Granville Garden in Tai Wai
- Block 2 of Grandeur Terrace in Tin Shui Wai
- On Hei House of Siu Hei Court in Tuen Mun

Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all CTCs will be closed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or higher or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force.

Free testing service will be provided to persons subject to compulsory testing at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations located at 35 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.

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). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to the DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purposes as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

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 contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

FEHD continues to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations during festive occasions

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (January 3) that the FEHD continued to step up its inspections territorywide and conduct joint operations with the Police in Southern District, Mong Kok District and Sha Tin District, so as to take stringent enforcement actions against operators, staff and customers of catering businesses and certain other premises in defiance of the anti-epidemic regulations during festive occasions including New Year's Eve and New Year holidays. The spokesman again reminded parties concerned to remain vigilant and strictly comply with the requirements and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation). The FEHD will continue to conduct enforcement operations proactively, and urges premises operators not to defy the law.

In the past three days, the FEHD and the Police inspected a total of 37 catering premises during the joint operations; and the FEHD on its own inspected a total of 1 370 catering premises and 435 other premises. The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against operators of 39 catering premises and one karaoke establishment suspected of breaching the requirements under the directions. Among the requirements suspected to be breached, twenty related to mask-wearing, eight related to the distance or partition between tables, five related to display of notice concerning mode of operation, one related to display of notice concerning air change or air purifiers, one related to ensuring scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers, one related to maximum number of persons allowed to be seated together at one table, one related to ensuring staff to comply with vaccination requirement, one related to ensuring staff to comply with regular testing requirement, one related to both display of notice concerning mode of operation and ensuring scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers and one related to both mask-wearing and the distance or partition between tables. The FEHD also required these premises to take corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission. They had to, on the subsequent day of being identified the irregularities by the enforcement officers, cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, and allow no more than two persons to be seated together at one table, ranging from three, seven to 14 days, while the karaoke establishment is required to be closed for three days. In addition, the FEHD also issued fixed penalty tickets (FPNs) to three customers suspected of breaching the requirement of scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code, one staff suspected of breaching the vaccination requirement and one staff suspected of breaching the regular testing requirement. During the joint operations, the Police

also took enforcement actions, including issuing fixed penalty notices.

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business contravenes the Regulation, he or she is liable to being prosecuted and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who are present at any premises of a catering business must comply with directions applicable to them. Non-compliance with the relevant directions would be an offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000. The liability may be discharged by paying a fixed penalty of \$5,000. In addition, for customers in breach of the requirement on the maximum number of persons per table within catering premises, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating Cap. 599G. For customers not wearing a mask when they are eating or drinking not at a table therein or they are not eating or drinking, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I).

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement on catering premises and take stringent enforcement actions against offenders. To minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19, the spokesman strongly appealed to operators and staff members of all premises as well as members of the public to continue to comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease and observe all prevailing social distancing measures in a persistent manner during and after the New Year Holidays and fight the virus together.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 3), five patients who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12431, 12435, 12483, 12488 and 12492) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 219 patients have been discharged.

A total of 225 patients who tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre and the Community Treatment Facility at Asia-World Expo. Among those patients, one is in serious condition (case number: 12548) while the remainder 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 provides update on SARS-CoV-2 virus cases related to Moon Palace

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 3) provided updates on the epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of SARS-CoV-2 virus cases involving Moon Palace at Festival Walk. There are so far five cases (case 12611, 12637, 12654, 12673 and 12708) tested positive related to Moon Palace.

Among the above-mentioned relevant cases, case 12708 is an additional case announced today involving a 38-year-old female, who is the wife of case 12654 and had meal together at Moon Palace from around 2.30pm to 4pm on December 27. She went to a community testing centre for test in accordance with the relevant requirement of the compulsory testing notice (CTN) on December 29 and tested negative. She was classified as a household close contact and was arranged to conduct quarantine at Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC) on December 30. She developed sore throat on January 1 and her specimen collected on January 2 tested positive with a Ct value larger than 30, carrying N501Y and T478K mutant strains. Her Ct value dropped to 25 after admission to hospital, indicating a recent infection preliminarily.

Moreover, the whole genome sequencing analysis conducted by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that cases 12611, 12637 and 12654 have identical genetic sequences. The DH will continue to conduct whole genome sequencing analysis for the remaining cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating an additional case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus which is related to the Moon Palace. It involves a 66-year-old female living in Tower 2, Granville Garden, 18 Pik Tin Street in Tai Wai, who had meal at Moon Palace from around 12.30pm to 1.30pm on December 27. She went to a community testing centre for test in accordance with the relevant requirement of the CTN on December 29 and tested negative. She was arranged to conduct quarantine at PBQC on December 31 and tested negative on the same day. She developed sore throat and cough on January 2 and her specimen collected on the same day tested preliminarily positive with a Ct value larger than 30, carrying N501Y mutant strain. The patient is retired and has no recent travel history. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on July 16 and August 13 in Hong Kong.

As a prudent measure, the Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" tonight for the building where the patient resides (Tower 2, Granville Garden, 18 Pik Tin Street in Tai Wai) and persons who resided or worked at the buildings will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where the patient had visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period will also be included in a CTN. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo

compulsory testing on the specified date.

The CHP is continuing its contact tracing work of cases related to Moon Palace. The latest investigation revealed that there were a total of 207 customers who have patronised that restaurant during the relevant period of time, among which 201 have been arranged to conduct quarantine at PBQC. The CHP has earlier collected 44 environmental samples in which none of them tested positive. The CHP collected an additional 46 environmental samples today with the test results pending.

The Government has earlier exercised power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to require any person who had been present at Moon Palace from 1pm to 3pm on December 27 (including but not limited to visitors and workers), have to undergo testing by December 30. Moon Palace will be included in a CTN again for prudence sake and relevant persons will be required to undergo another test on or before tomorrow (January 4) and to report their testing results to the CHP. The CHP appeals again to those who had meals at Moon Palace from 1pm to 3pm on December 27 to call the CHP's hotlines at 2125 1111 or 2125 1122 as soon as possible to facilitate the CHP's epidemiological investigations and contact tracing.

â€‹The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously follow up their compliance 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).