

Employers and employees should take precautions during cold weather

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Cold Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Cold Weather Warning is in force, they should take appropriate precautions such as reminding employees who have to work outdoors or in remote areas to wear appropriately warm clothing, and make arrangements for employees to rotate from outdoor to indoor or sheltered work sites as far as possible. Employees should take note of the weather report, wear appropriately warm clothing and be mindful of their health conditions. They should notify their supervisors and seek medical help immediately if feeling unwell, such as having cold limbs and body shivering.

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

In view of a non-locally confirmed case who had stayed in Hong Kong and two preliminary positive imported cases who had stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation period, 24 specified premises visited by the case are included in the compulsory testing notice. For prudence's sake, the above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

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.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are in Annex 1.

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 December 26, there were around 31 000 booking places available for today (December 27) 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 mobile specimen collection stations at Tower 10 of Park Avenue in Tai Kok Tsui and Ocean Park public transport interchange today to provide free testing service for persons subject to compulsory testing. As persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of local COVID-19 cases with a mutant strain will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH, the mobile specimen collection station at the open area outside On Hei House, Siu Hei Court, Tuen Mun will also continue to operate today to provide free testing service for residents and workers subject to compulsory testing. 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 40 places in various districts today. The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. Persons subject to compulsory testing and those with the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the CHP reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive 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."

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Fatal traffic accident in Chai Wan

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Chai Wan this morning (December 26) in which a 25-year-old man died.

At 7.22am, a motorcycle driven by a 25-year-old man was travelling along Shek O Road towards Shek O, whereas, a private car driven by a 35-year-old man was travelling along Shek O Road towards Chai Wan. When approaching near Cape D'Aguilar, the motorcycle reportedly lost control and dashed to the opposite lane, while the private car failed to brake in time and rammed into the motorcycle.

After the impact, the two vehicles caught fire. The fire was put out by firemen.

Sustaining serious head injuries, the motorcyclist was rushed to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 8.20am.

The private car driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for further enquiries.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Hong Kong Island is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3660 6800 or 3660 6848.

HAD opens temporary cold shelters

In view of the cold weather, the Home Affairs Department has opened 18 temporary shelters today (December 26) for people in need of the service.

The temporary shelters will remain open during the daytime tomorrow (December 27) when the Cold Weather Warning is still in force.

To ensure that cold shelter users can rest in a quiet and undisturbed environment, members of the public or agencies wishing to make donations to shelter users are requested to register with the staff of the shelter first. Donors will then be directed to place the donated items at a specified indoor location. The staff will help notify the shelter users to collect the items on their own.

Anyone seeking temporary refuge or with any questions about the donation arrangements at the cold shelters may call the department's hotline 2572 8427 for more information.

In light of the implementation of mandatory use of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application when entering government premises, all persons are required to use the app to scan the venue QR code before they are allowed to enter temporary cold shelters, except for exempted persons (including persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, persons with disabilities that render use of the app difficult and persons without smartphones). All exempted persons are required to complete a prescribed form to register their personal particulars, contact phone number and the date and time of entry. The staff will verify the information provided.

The 18 temporary cold shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Island:

Central and Western:

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex, 2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern:

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern:

Wah Kwai Community Centre
Wah Kwai Estate, Kellett Bay

Wan Chai:

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon:

Kowloon City:

Hung Hom Community Hall

1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices, 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong:

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre

71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po:

Nam Cheong District Community Centre

1 Cheong San Lane, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin:

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre

45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong:

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre

60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories:

Islands:

Tung Chung North Park (Zone B) Activity Room

29 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing:

Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre

15 Tai Wo Hau Road, Kwai Chung

North:

Cheung Wah Community Hall

Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung:

Chi Shin Activity Centre

G/F, Tseung Kwan O South Ancillary Facilities Block

5 Chi Shin Street, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin:

Lung Hang Estate Community Centre

Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po:

Tai Po Community Centre

2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan:

Lei Muk Shue Community Hall

G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun:

Butterfly Bay Community Centre

Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long:

Long Ping Community Hall

Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long