

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice and specifications under Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation

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 and specifications, which requires any person who had been present at 37 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test, and continue to empower a registered medical practitioner to require any person whom he or she clinically suspects has contracted COVID-19 to undergo a test during a period of 14 days from December 25, 2021 to January 7, 2022.

Compulsory testing notice

In view of four preliminary positive imported cases who had stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation period and a non-locally confirmed case who had stayed in Hong Kong, 37 specified premises 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 1pm on December 24, there were around 34 000 booking places available for today (December 25) at the CTCs, and around 93 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 the following locations today for persons subject to compulsory testing for free:

- Basketball Court, Tai Po Community Centre
- Luen Wo Hui Community Hall, Fanling
- Open area outside On Hei House, Siu Hei Court, 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 31 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.

Relevant specifications for compulsory testing for persons clinically suspected to have contracted COVID-19

According to expert advice, compulsory testing for symptomatic patients can effectively slow down the transmission of the virus by early identification, early isolation and early treatment. To keep the epidemic situation under control, the Government considers it necessary to continue to solicit help from medical practitioners in identifying possibly infected persons as soon as possible.

During the period of 14 days from December 25, 2021 to January 7, 2022, registered medical practitioners may, by a written direction, require a person whom the medical practitioner attends to in the course of professional practice and clinically suspects to have contracted COVID-19 to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test. Persons who receive the written direction (persons who are subject to testing under written directions) should undergo a test within two days after the issue date of the written direction (the testing deadline).

Persons who are subject to testing under written directions may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(1) To use the specimen bottle provided by the registered medical practitioner who issued the written direction to collect a deep throat saliva specimen and submit the specimen bottle to a designated specimen collection point by the testing deadline (see the specimen collection points and times at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html). Having reported the case to the DH, the registered medical practitioner who issued the written

direction will be notified of the test result; or

(2) To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories recognised by the DH (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf) by the testing deadline and submit the test result to the medical practitioner who issued the written direction or his clinic staff by email, fax or hard copy within four days after the testing deadline.

For example, if the written direction is issued on a Monday, the person subject to testing under the written direction should undergo a test via one of the above options on or before Wednesday, the testing deadline. If the test result of the specimen is preliminary positive, the specimen will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the DH for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the CHP of the DH.

"Persons who are subject to testing under written directions are suspected to be infected and should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs for testing. To reduce transmission risk, relevant persons who underwent testing are advised to stay at home and avoid going out when waiting for test results."

â€‹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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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."

[Appeal for information on missing woman in Kowloon City \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (December 24) appealed to the public for information on a woman who went missing in Kowloon City.

Yeung Ming-ho, aged 76, went missing after she was last seen at a caring centre on Boundary Street yesterday (December 23). Staff of the caring centre made a report to Police on the same day.

She is about 1.5 metres tall, 45 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a long face with yellow complexion and long grey hair. She was last seen wearing a grey sweater, blue checkered pants, purple slippers and carrying a purple handbag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8036, 9020 6542 or email to rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[Government tightens boarding and quarantine requirements for places with Omicron cases detected](#)

The Government announced today (December 24) that in view of the latest global developments of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Réunion and Serbia will be specified as Group A specified places from 0.00am on December 27 to

tighten the boarding and quarantine requirements for relevant inbound travellers.

As a preventive measure and with reference to the relevant risks, the Government will specify overseas places that have detected Omicron cases as Group A specified places. Noting that the detection of Omicron cases was confirmed in Réunion and Serbia, the Government will specify them as Group A specified places from 0.00am on December 27. 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.

FEHD reminds catering business operators to continuously comply with requirements on air change or air purifiers

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 24) reminded catering business operators again that they must strictly observe the requirements (including those on air change or air purifiers to be complied with in dine-in catering premises) under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation), so as to protect the health of staff, customers and the public, and to fortify the public's confidence in patronising catering premises.

The spokesman said, "COVID-19, particularly the latest Omicron mutant strain, continues to spread rapidly around the world. In view of the tradition for families and friends to get together during Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year holidays, the risk of virus transmission may further

increase as customers will take off their masks when having a meal at catering premises. Indoor catering premises with sufficient air change per hour (ACH) or equipped with air purifiers of good and high efficacy performance can help reduce the risk of virus transmission."

Under the Regulation, catering premises operators are required to register at the FEHD's webpage that the ACH at seating areas of their premises has reached at least six, or air purifiers that meet the specified specifications have been installed according to the on-the-ground situation, together with a certificate issued by a registered specialist contractor (ventilation works category). In addition, they must, after air purifiers have been installed at the premises, properly switch on, operate, maintain and repair the air purifiers in accordance with the manufacturer's manual when their premises are open for business. The FEHD is going to issue advisory letters again to catering business operators reminding them to comply with the relevant requirements. The letter has also been uploaded to the FEHD's webpage.

To minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the spokesman appealed to catering business operators and the public to continue to comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner during, as well as before and after Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year holidays, to protect personal and public health. He also stressed that the FEHD will take stringent enforcement actions against those in violation of regulations on prevention and control of disease, environmental hygiene and food safety, etc.