

Compulsory testing notice gazetted

The Government has exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and published in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at seven specified premises (see Annex 1) during the period from November 1 to 23 to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test by November 26.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said today (November 24), "The local epidemic situation is worsening rapidly. The number of confirmed cases related to group gathering activities in indoor premises continues to rise significantly. As such, the Government published in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice under the Regulation for the first time on November 21, requiring persons who had been to 14 specified dance premises to undergo compulsory testing.

"Upon further contact tracing by the Centre for Health Protection, we found that large group gathering activities in other premises were involved for some recent confirmed cases. Therefore, the Government published another compulsory testing notice, which requires persons who had been to seven other premises to undergo testing."

According to the latest notice, all persons who had been to any of the seven specified premises during the period from November 1 to 23 must undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test by November 26 through designated means.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing as below:

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 47 designated general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to designated specimen collection points (see the specimen collection packs distribution time and specimen collection time at www.ha.org.hk/haho/ho/covid-19/GOPC_extend_TC.pdf);
2. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories recognised by the Department of Health (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories.pdf);
3. To attend any of the four Community Testing Centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/);
4. To visit any of the seven mobile specimen collection stations/specimen bottle distribution points (see the list at Annex 2) for testing, or obtain and submit specimen bottles; or
5. To undergo testing at any healthcare facilities of the Hospital Authority (including GOPCs and accident and emergency departments) as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority.

The spokesman said, "We encourage persons who are subject to compulsory testing to obtain deep throat saliva specimen collection packs from designated GOPCs. No reservation is needed. As long as their specimens are submitted on or before November 26, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice."

"If persons who are 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 Community Testing Centres."

Persons who are subject to compulsory testing must report the result of the test or submit the test report to the Government by phone (6275 6901), fax (2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) by November 29. If persons who are subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone the above mentioned test between November 20 and 23, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

The spokesman said, "To reduce transmission risk, persons who underwent testing are advised to stay at home and avoid going out when waiting for test results."

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901 which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons who are subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the Community Testing Centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the Community Testing Centres are as follows:

Quarry Bay Community Hall, Eastern District (Prenetics)	3008 8325
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre (Kingmed Diagnostics (Hong Kong) Limited)	9869 3603
Lek Yuen Community Hall, Sha Tin (Hong Kong Molecular Pathology Diagnostic Centre Limited)	2986 1272 2986 1270
Yuen Long Town East Community Hall (BGI)	2818 9690

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant venues, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notice. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$2,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified timeframe. 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.

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. The Food and Health Bureau will publish compulsory testing notices regarding particular groups when necessary taking into account the epidemic development and the testing participation rate."