

Construction site personnel can make appointments for free COVID-19 testing service

The Food and Health Bureau announced today (March 31) that the Government will continue to provide one-off free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to all construction site personnel in Hong Kong within April. Eligible persons may make booking for testing service online starting today.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The Government provided one-off free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to registered construction workers at community testing centres through online booking in March. The response had been positive. Although the local epidemic situation is gradually abating, the global epidemic situation has continued to remain severe. We need to continue to suppress the epidemic and avoid any rebound. Having considered the effectiveness of regular testing in suppressing the overall epidemic situation and individual cluster outbreaks, we considered it necessary to extend the relevant testing arrangements.

"The Government will regularly review the coverage of relevant targeted groups based on the latest epidemic risk assessment."

"The free testing service for construction site personnel will be available until end April. Apart from registered construction workers, the free testing service will also be open to other resident site personnel. We encourage eligible persons to actively participate in the free voluntary testing to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers. The construction workers who underwent testing in March can make booking again. Eligible persons can choose a suitable time slot for testing taking into account their own needs. If the eligible persons have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo free testing provided by the Government as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the community testing centres."

Eligible persons should make advance booking for the free testing service via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). Those who did not make an appointment have to pay for the testing service at \$240.

The community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when the testing centres close in the afternoon and at night. When arriving at the community testing centre at the designated time slot, registered construction workers and other resident site personnel should present identity document used at the time of booking (such as Hong Kong identity card or passport), the SMS booking confirmation as well as their construction worker registration card issued by the Construction Industry Council or a letter issued by their main contractor as identity proof for the resident site

personnel of their respective site for verification.

From April 1 till April 30, each eligible person can receive free testing service once only. Participants will be notified by SMS through their mobile phones if the test result is negative. Should any specimen be tested preliminary positive, it will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

Currently, the number of tests available for appointments at community testing centres has been greatly increased to over 38 000 per day. As of today, the appointment rate of the 21 community testing centres in the territory for the next seven days is only about 20 per cent, with plenty of places available to meet the testing demand. Construction site personnel may attend community testing centres in various districts for free testing.

In addition to attending the community testing centres for testing, citizens can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including obtaining a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, MTR stations or designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points. For details on testing means other than community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html.

Furthermore, to encourage more members of the public to receive vaccination as early as possible, the Government is exploring that relevant personnel who have completed vaccination (i.e. 14 days after receiving the second vaccine dose) would be deemed as having fulfilled the regular testing requirement. The Development Bureau is discussing with the construction industry with a view to encouraging industry practitioners to receive vaccination as early as possible as an arrangement in place of regular testing, and details will be announced at a suitable juncture when confirmed.