

## EPD arranges COVID-19 testing for frontline staff

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (August 24) announced that about 500 frontline staff who have frequent contact with members of the public will be arranged to undergo COVID-19 testing on August 25 and 26 to safeguard the health of the public and the staff.

The Chief Executive announced on August 7 that the Targeted Group Testing Scheme would be extended to cover frontline employees of government departments that have frequent contact with members of the public. The EPD thus arranged relevant frontline staff to undergo COVID-19 testing.

A spokesman for the EPD said that the testing was voluntary. EPD frontline staff mainly responsible for performing counter duties, enforcing environmental regulations, handling public complaints outdoors, patrolling outdoor and indoor premises and facilities, including sewers and kitchens of eateries, etc, will undergo the test. Staff of the operators of Community Green Stations and Community Recycling Centres, and staff of the operator of WEEE•PARK, responsible for collecting waste electrical and electronic equipment from the public, will also be included.

The spokesman said, "Specimens will be collected by trained and qualified staff of a testing agency using the combined nasal and throat swab method. The testing agency will deploy manpower to collect specimens from the staff concerned at the four sites designated by the EPD. The specimens will then be delivered to the testing agency's laboratory for testing, and the agency will notify the EPD of the test results. We have awarded the contract for the above one-stop testing service to DNA WeCheck Limited through established procurement procedures."

The EPD anticipates that the testing will be completed on August 27. For any specimen with positive results, the testing agency will inform the EPD and Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health of its serial number for follow-up action. Throughout the testing process, no personal particulars will be indicated on the sampling bottles. The testing agency will only have access to the serial numbers of specimens and will not acquire or retain any personal information of the staff. Specimens will also be destroyed after completion of the testing.

The EPD will put in place appropriate infection control measures at the testing sites. All people are required to have their body temperature checked and their hands sanitised with alcohol-based handrub before entering the sites. Partitions will be installed at the specimen collection areas, and proper instructions will be set out for the staff participating in the testing to maintain social distancing while awaiting and during testing.