

[FEHD explains latest COVID-19 testing arrangements to cold store practitioners \(with photo\)](#)

In view of the ongoing severe situation of COVID-19 infection around the world and the higher transmissibility of mutant strains which has a much faster rate of spread, the Government has announced earlier that it will continue to expand and strengthen the large-scale COVID-19 testing for groups of different risks. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) held a briefing session today (November 5) to cold store operators and practitioners to detail the latest arrangements applicable to them.

The briefing session was hosted by the Deputy Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Miss Diane Wong, with around 60 members of the trade participated. FEHD officers explained to participants that the Government is progressively arranging an increase in testing frequency for working staff of high-risk and high-exposure groups. The Government will stipulate under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap 599J) that cold store practitioners (including full-time, part-time, casual and relief staff, and staff under a hire-of-service contract with cold stores) who would enter the warehouse inside the cold store in which articles of food are stored under refrigeration; or come into contact with or be involved in loading/unloading of articles of food which require refrigeration, will be required to undergo testing once every three days if they have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course, while those who have not yet completed a vaccination course (including staff who are unfit to receive vaccination at the moment because of health reasons) are required to get tested on a daily basis. Eligible cold store practitioners can receive free tests at community testing centres (CTC) or mobile specimen collection stations.

FEHD officers reminded participants that as the Government no longer accepts deep throat saliva specimen for compulsory or regular testing, the testing of all targeted group persons (with cold store workers included), whether they have completed a vaccination course or not, must be done by using combined nasal and throat swabs. Also, they will be required to present relevant vaccination record or medical certificate, and document proof stamped by cold store operator to the CTC or mobile specimen collection stations staff for verification purpose. In addition, cold store operators will be required to register relevant information of their staff online through the FEHD's website.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "To arrange more frequent regular virus testing for cold store practitioners is an anti-epidemic measure by the Government to guard against the importation of cases and the resurgence of local infections and to complement the proactive 'zero infection' strategy. The enhancement in testing also enables staff who are exposed to higher infection risks during work to return to the community safely after work and

offer protection to their families and friends in daily life."

The spokesman appealed to the practitioners concerned to comply with the latest directions and arrangements to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

