

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Block 21, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

The Government exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) on February 18 to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po (i.e. Block 21, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. The Government yesterday (February 19) extended the period of operation to today (February 20). Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained and they had to undergo two tests under the designated arrangement. In addition, any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from February 5 to February 18, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before February 20, 2022. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 5pm today and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 5pm today, persons in the "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test as designated. A total of around 2 150 person-time had undergone testing in the first round and second round of testing. 168 tested preliminary positive cases and six indeterminate cases were found and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will take follow up action. Regarding cases tested preliminarily positive in the specified "restricted area", the Government will distribute disinfection products and surgical masks to these persons for use while waiting for follow-up arrangement.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit about 470 households, among which 30 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$10,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.