

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Block 5 and Block 6, Richland Gardens, Kowloon Bay

The Government yesterday (April 1) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 4pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kowloon Bay (i.e. Block 5 and Block 6, Richland Gardens, Kowloon Bay) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. 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. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past three months, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, were not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise. In addition, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any persons, other than those specified above, who had been present at the buildings for more than two hours from March 19 to April 1, 2022, to undergo compulsory testing on or before April 3, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect.

The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 10am today (April 2) 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 10am today, persons in the specified "restricted area" in Kowloon Bay 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" yesterday 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 before 9pm yesterday. During the exercise, 1 015 people within the "restricted area" had undergone testing, among which 10 cases tested positive and two indeterminate cases were found. The Centre for Health Protection of the DH will arrange to follow up.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit 544 households in the "restricted area", among which 70 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 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.