

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Oi Lai House, Yau Oi Estate, Tuen Mun

The Government yesterday (March 13) 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 3.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tuen Mun (i.e. Oi Lai House, Yau Oi Estate, Tuen Mun, excluding kindergarten on G/F) 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 were tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus on or after December 31, 2021, were not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

In addition, the Government had issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the building for more than two hours from February 28 to March 13, 2022, to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 15, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 1.30pm today (March 14) 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 1.30pm today, persons in the specified "restricted area" in Tuen Mun, who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results 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 8pm yesterday. 1 438 people within the area had undergone testing. 180 cases tested preliminarily positive and 39 cases tested indeterminate were found. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will arrange to follow up.

The Government provided food packs for persons subject to compulsory testing so as to facilitate their meal arrangements. Rapid antigen test kits and proprietary Chinese medicines supplied by the Central Government were also provided to help them fight against the virus.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 770 households, among which 36 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.