

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Po Tin Estate, Tuen Mun

The Government yesterday (March 19) 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 Tuen Mun (i.e. Block 3, Po Tin Estate, Tuen Mun) 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 issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any persons, other than those specified above, who had been present at the building for more than two hours from March 6 to March 19, 2022 to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 21, 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 11am today (March 20) 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 11am 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 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. Around 918 people within the "restricted area" had undergone testing, among which 46 cases tested preliminarily positive. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will arrange to follow up.

Regarding cases tested preliminarily positive in the specified

"restricted area" the Government has provided additional food packs, health advice for persons tested preliminarily positive pending admission to hospitals or isolation facilities, disinfection products and surgical masks to these persons and their household members pending follow-up arrangement.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 900 households within the "restricted area", among which 260 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 or wear a wristband 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.