

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tai Po (with photo)

The Government yesterday (February 2) 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 7pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tai Po (i.e. Tsui Wo House, Tai Wo Estate, Tai Po) 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. 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 January 29, 2022 to February 2, 2022 to undergo compulsory testing on or before February 4, 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 9.10am today (February 3) 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 9.10am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Tai Po who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results or wear wristbands 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 11.30pm yesterday. As at 11.30pm yesterday, around 2095 people within the area had undergone testing, among which one case tested preliminarily positive was found. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will arrange to follow up.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 950 households, among which around 175 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 \$5,000. 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.

