

Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” on Old Peak Road, Central and Western District (with photo)

The Government yesterday (March 14) 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 Central and Western District (i.e. Tower 1 to 5, Dynasty Court, 23 Old Peak Road, Central and Western District) 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 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 buildings for more than two hours from March 1 to March 14, 2021, to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 16 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 8.40am today (March 15) 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 8.40am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Central and Western District 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 0.00am today. As at 0.00am today, around 960 residents had undergone testing. Two preliminary positive cases were found, and the Department of Health is following up on the cases. Moreover, the test result of a specimen is still under verification.

Also, the Government assigned staff to visit around 410 households. Around 80 households did not answer the door. Those include some households with confirmed cases or those undergoing quarantine. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this

respect and will take measures to follow up.

The Government also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or by other means. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from March 10 to 14, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again.

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.

