

Government extends period of operation under "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice at Leung Kit House in Leung King Estate, Tuen Mun

The Government on February 6 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 7.30pm that day, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tuen Mun (i.e. Leung Kit House, excluding LKWFS Chu Sui Lan Anglo-Chinese Kindergarten on G/F, Leung King Estate, 31 Tin King Road, Tuen Mun) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. As it takes time for the testing contractor to confirm the test results, the Government today (February 8) decided to extend the period of operation for Leung Kit House (See Annex) in the "restricted area" and aims at finishing the exercise at about 10am tomorrow (February 9). Persons subject to compulsory testing at Leung Kit House are required to stay in their premises and undergo two tests under the designated arrangement (including the tests conducted on February 6 and February 8 under the declaration), until the test results of all such persons identified in Leung Kit House are mostly ascertained, and upon the agreement of the Secretary for Food and Health having regard to all the circumstances and the public interest of Hong Kong.

A Government spokesman said, "Recently, sewage discharged from Leung Kit House, Leung King Estate, was tested positive for COVID-19 and over 50 preliminarily tested positive cases have been identified under the 'restriction-testing declaration' operation conducted on February 6, which is worrying. In view of the significant risk of infection at Leung Kit House, Leung King Estate, and as the testing is still ongoing and the results are pending, we consider it necessary to extend the 'restriction-testing declaration' operation made earlier under Cap. 599J to February 9 to ensure that persons subject to compulsory testing have completed testing and prevent the virus from further spreading."

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" 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 as designated on February 6 and February 8. As at 8pm today, about 3 215 person-time had undergone testing. The test results are pending.

The Tuen Mun District Office has prepared instant noodles, meal boxes, etc, to persons subject to compulsory testing, so as to facilitate the meal

arrangements of them. Daily necessities and cleaning products have also been provided to them.

In order to maintain public and emergency services within the "restricted area", the Government and relevant working staff (such as healthcare officers and other officers of the Hospital Authority, testing service providers engaged by the Government and cleaning service providers) are allowed to enter and leave the "restricted area" on condition that personal information and contact details are given as well as certain infection control instructions are followed (including undergoing testing before leaving the "restricted area" without the need to wait for the test results). In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship for individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow those persons to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. Such persons must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and must leave their personal information for contact purposes.

The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) for residents restricted by the declarations to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or 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 would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.