

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Choi Wui House, Choi Hing Court, Kowloon Bay, and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice

The Government yesterday (April 7) 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 3pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kowloon Bay (i.e. Choi Wui House, Choi Hing Court, Kowloon Bay) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past three months, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, were not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday, requiring persons who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from March 25 to April 7, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing on or before April 9, 2022.

The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 11am today (April 8) and carried out enforcement action in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing in accordance with the requirements of the relevant declaration and compulsory testing notice. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at around noon today.

The Government provided food packs for persons subject to compulsory testing to facilitate their meal arrangements. Anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines donated by the Central Government were also distributed to persons subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus. The Innovation and Technology Bureau and its departments also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

The operation was co-ordinated and conducted by the Innovation and Technology Bureau, the Innovation and Technology Commission, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Efficiency Office.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupled with the tireless efforts of the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results by SMS notification. After finishing the compulsory testing exercise at around 11am today, the Government took enforcement action in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone testing according to the requirements of the declaration and the compulsory testing notice. Persons who could present an SMS notification containing a negative testing result and wore a wristband as proof of having undergone the compulsory testing could leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer. The enforcement operation was completed at around noon. Test records of 193 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked. One person was found not having undergone compulsory testing and compulsory testing order was issued to that person. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

The Government reminds the 78 households who have not answered the door to contact the Government for arrangement of testing as soon as possible after reading the notices put up by the Government, in the hope of eliminating the possible risk of further spread of the virus in the community.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the results at home.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person will 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 order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.