

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Lai Kuk House, Lai Kok Estate, Sham Shui Po and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice

The Government yesterday (March 15) 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 within the specified "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po (i.e. Lai Kuk House, Lai Kok Estate, Sham Shui Po) (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") 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 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.

Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday, requiring persons, other than those specified above, who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from March 2 to March 15, 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 March 17, 2022. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 11am today (March 16) 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 3pm today.

Staff from the Trade and Industry Department, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Housing Department took part in this exercise to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

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 and rapid antigen test kits were also distributed to persons subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

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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 or 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 3pm. Test records of 289 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked. One person was found not having undergone compulsory testing and compulsory testing order was issued to him. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see Annex).

The Government reminds the 43 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 liable to 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 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.