

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

The Government exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" on February 17 with effect from 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po (i.e. Mei Wui House, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po, excluding the podium level) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. The Government yesterday (February 18) extended the period of operation to today (February 19). Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises and undergo two tests under the designated arrangement until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. In addition, any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from February 4 to February 17, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before February 19, 2022. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 10am today 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.

In this exercise, the Housing Department, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office of the Department of Health mobilised around 380 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government also delivered food pack, including canned food and instant noodles, to persons subject to compulsory testing to facilitate their meal arrangements.

The Housing Department set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

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 10am 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 test result 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 about 180 persons subject to compulsory testing were checked. Nobody was found to have not undergone compulsory testing. 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 reminded the 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.