

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in North Point and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice (with photos)

The Government yesterday (January 28) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 7pm yesterday, by which people within the specified "restricted area" in North Point (i.e. Blocks A, B, C and D of Tung Fat Building, Kam Ping Street) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the arrangement by the Government. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice earlier, requiring persons who had been present in the building for more than two hours within the period specified in the notice, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 7am today (January 29) and carried out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at about 11.30am this morning.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Eastern District Office and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) mobilised around 360 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including food packs (with instant noodles, pasta, canned food, etc), cup noodles, soup packs, soy milk, bread and bottled water, etc, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangement of some persons subject to compulsory testing. The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The hotline handled around 13 enquiries on the testing arrangement.

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 about 7am today, the Government took enforcement actions in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone testing. 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 completed at about 11.30am. Fifteen persons were found not having undergone compulsory testing. A fixed penalty of \$5,000 and a compulsory testing order were issued to them. Taking into account of the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

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The Government understands that quite some residents already underwent testing at the testing station set up at the road section between Pak Fuk Building's main entrance and Metropole Building's rear entrance from January 26 to 28. A total of 1 300 persons already undertook the test (including residents of Blocks A, B, C and D of Tung Fat Building; visitors and working staff.)

The Government understands that residents in the district are worried and anxious because of the increase in confirmed cases in recent days. Under the epidemic, businesses in the area have been hit hard and brought to a standstill. Residents' livelihoods are also affected. The Government hopes this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains in the district and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

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

The Government as a whole is united in fighting against the virus despite all the difficulties, and provided testing for all the residents in the district within a short period of time in the hope of achieving zero cases in the district.

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 \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified timeframe. 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.

