

Government follows up on positive results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing

The Government announced today (February 3) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department and the Drainage Services Department in collaboration with the cross-disciplinary team of the University of Hong Kong had strengthened the sampling of sewage for virus testing in all districts, and had detected positive results in many areas, indicating that there may be hidden cases in the premises within these areas.

Compulsory testing

In response to the positive sewage testing results in Ma Wan, the Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, requiring any person who had been present at the following specified premises (see Annex) during the specified period to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test –

- Sewage Testing Area Islands Site 4A (Area around Park Island and Pak Lam Road Garden in Ma Wan)

The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. They are advised to closely monitor their health conditions. They should seek medical attention and undergo testing even if they have only mild symptoms.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the website of the Centre for Health Protection, the Department of Health, via www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/105294.html.

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results in Ma Wan and Discovery Bay, the Home Affairs Department (including Tsuen Wan and Islands District Offices) will distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits to residents and all cleansing workers and property management staff working in the following areas for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identifying infected persons –

- Sewage Testing Area Islands Site 4A (Area around Park Island and Pak Lam Road Garden in Ma Wan) (see Annex)
- Discovery Bay in Lantau Island

The Government appeals to residents and those working in these areas who have been exposed to infection risks to undergo testing on a voluntary basis to achieve "early identification, early isolation and early treatment". Residents may refer to (www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjLzD3-gab4) for enquiries relating to the use of the rapid test kits.

If positive test result is shown on the test kit, medical attention should be sought at the Accident and Emergency Departments promptly to receive appropriate diagnosis and treatment at the earliest possible time. Residents tested positive should stay home as far as possible to avoid spreading the virus in the community. The Government stresses that rapid test kit testing is not a substitute for the compulsory testing requirement. Individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, who have visited places with epidemic outbreaks or have had contact with persons tested positive, etc, should undergo testing promptly at testing centres.