

Government further strengthens compulsory testing

The Government exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and published in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 29 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

Currently, in all districts in Hong Kong, if one or more new confirmed cases are found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses), or there are sewage samples tested positive which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

To strengthen testing targeting at workplaces, starting from February 27, if one or more confirmed cases are found in a workplace, it will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

Twenty-eight buildings fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notice on February 27. Among them, since preliminary confirmed cases were found in more than one shop in K11 Musea, Victoria Dockside, 18 Salisbury Road, Yau Tsim Mong, persons who had been engaged to work or had been on duty at the mall have to undergo compulsory testing. In addition, since there was staff confirmed positive in St. Hilary's Kindergarten (Hung Hom), G/F-2/F, Metro 6, 121 Bulkeley Street, Hung Hom, apart from the staff, students attending that school also have to undergo compulsory testing taking into account the possible higher infectious risks.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

1. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part A of Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from February 14 to February 27, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by March 1, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between February 25 and February 27, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.
2. Any person who had been engaged to work or had been on duty (including full-time, part-time and relief staff) at any specified premises listed in Part B of Annex 1 at any time during the period from February 14 to February 27, 2021, have to undergo testing by March 1, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between February 25 and February 27, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.
3. Any person who had been engaged to work or had been on duty (including

full-time, part-time and relief staff) or students who had studied at any specified premises listed in Part C of Annex 1 at any time during the period from February 14 to February 27, 2021, have to undergo testing by March 1, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing choose to undergo testing using the specimen bottles distributed by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), they have to return the specimen bottle with the sample by March 3, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between February 25 and February 27, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

Since the number of confirmed cases in the cluster related to K11 Musea has been increasing, CHP has further expanded the coverage of notifications of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app in relation to the relevant venues in K11 Musea for users to download. Members of the public who had been to the relevant venues in K11 Musea and scanned the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR codes from February 19 to February 26, 2021 will receive exposure notifications. Citizens who receive the relevant notifications are advised to undergo testing as soon as possible.

Persons who receive the exposure notifications under "LeaveHomeSafe" (including those related to K11 Musea cases and other cases) can make appointments online to receive testing free of charge once at community testing centres by showing the notifications in the mobile phones.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminds the public that in accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person who is placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, have to undergo testing within two days of he/she becoming aware of the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations today (February 28) for local residents and workers subject to compulsory testing:

- Block 45 of Heng Fa Chuen
- Fortress Garden, Fortress Hill
- Choi Wan (1) Estate, Choi Hung
- Lok Wah South Estate, Kwun Tong
- Kai Ching Estate, Kowloon City
- Ning Fung Court, Kwai Chung
- Yan Tin Estate, Tuen Mun
- Fu Shin Estate, Tai Po
- Yat Tung (1) Estate, Tung Chung

The service period of the mobile specimen collection station at Lai Chi Kok Community Hall will be extended to February 28, and that of the station at Arthur Street in Yau Ma Tei will be extended to March 7 (Sunday). Starting from March 1, the mobile specimen collection station at Wong Chuk Hang Recreation Ground will be relocated to Wah Kwai Community Hall and will be open to March 7 (Sunday) tentatively. The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in Annex 2. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any of the community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health (DH) and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf); or
6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at accident and emergency departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notification containing result of the test for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the community testing centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the community testing centres are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info/.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would 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 is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purpose as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."