

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

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, which requires any person who had been present at 16 specified places during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a number of cases testing positive, 12 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. Furthermore, since some sewage samples collected in Sau Mau Ping and Ho Man Tin have tested positive, four specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. Community testing centres (CTCs)/community testing stations (CTSs)/ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations have been set up by the Government in different districts to facilitate testing to be conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

Persons who have tested positive in the past three months (including positive cases tested either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RATs) that have been self-declared to the DH) and young children aged under 3 do not need to undergo compulsory testing. For those who need to undergo compulsory testing, they must undergo nucleic acid tests in accordance with relevant compulsory testing notices and cannot use RATs to fulfil the requirement of such notices. In other words, a negative RAT result cannot be deemed as fulfilling the compulsory testing requirement. Furthermore, unless a person subject to compulsory testing has obtained a medical certificate proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through a throat swab because of health reasons, the person cannot provide a deep throat saliva sample to fulfil the compulsory testing requirement.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link:
www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20221221.pdf.

If any persons test positive under compulsory testing, such positive cases will be handled in the same manner as in those identified through other nucleic acid tests or self-declared through RATs. Their isolation arrangements (as well as the quarantine arrangements of their household members) are no different from other positive cases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must undergo professional swab sampling at any of the ad-hoc

mobile specimen collection stations, CTCs/CTSs or recognised local medical testing institutions in order to fulfil the requirements for compulsory testing. Stool specimen may be used for testing when collecting respiratory specimen is not feasible for young children and those who are not suitable for respiratory specimen collection. For details on obtaining stool specimen bottles, please refer to the COVID-19 thematic website:
www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool_bottle_collection_points.pdf.

If the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day.

Vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated without delay. In view of the arrival of the Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.4-5 bivalent vaccine in Hong Kong, members of the public may choose to receive the BioNTech bivalent vaccine when they make appointments through the online booking system to receive the third, fourth or fifth dose (or the second, third or fourth dose for recovered persons), while the Sinovac or the BioNTech ancestral strain vaccines can still be used. Eligible persons aged 60 or above with same-day tickets may choose the type of vaccine to be administered on site.

[CTCs/CTSs across the city](#) provide free nucleic acid testing services for the public, including those who need to undergo compulsory testing, staff members of residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities, visitors to public hospitals and residential care homes and all elderly people aged 60 or above. Persons who wish to undergo a free test just need to make an online booking or use the Testing Registration QR code in the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application for registration.â€€

Booking services are available for all 86 CTC/CTSs. Members of the public can make bookings through the online booking system (booking.communitytest.gov.hk/form/index.jsp). Members of the public can also fill in their personal information in advance to obtain the Testing Registration Code QR code through the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application. They can present that QR code for scanning before testing at a service point thereafter, thus saving their time spent on registration and queueing.

To facilitate the holding of community activities and maintenance works, starting from December 29 (next Thursday), the CTS at Po Hong Park in Tseung Kwan O will be relocated to the open area outside Tseung Kwan O Sports Centre (near Po Lam MTR station) opposite Po Hong Park.

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

(a) For tests which require using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs or throat swab

1. To visit any of the ad-hoc 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 CTCs/CTSs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the 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), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs or throat swab; or
4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected per relevant guidelines.

(b) For persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through a throat swab because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, vending machines set up at MTR stations or designated general out-patient 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);
2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A Government spokesman cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority, 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 ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs/CTSs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the compulsory testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. The fixed penalty for discharging the liability is \$10,000. The person may also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Any person in breach of the compulsory testing order would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

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 had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."