

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government has 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 the specified premises during the specified period to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test by December 30.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said today (December 25), "Upon contact tracing by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), a number of confirmed cases not epidemiologically linked to each other were recently found in certain places within a short period of time. Members of the public who had been to the relevant places might be subject to higher infection risks. The Government has published a compulsory testing notice under Cap. 599J, which requires persons who had been to the specified premises during the specified period to undergo testing immediately."

Details are as follows:

Any person who had been present at Lotus Tower Block 2, Kwun Tong Garden Estate, 297 Ngau Tau Kok Road, Kwun Tong for more than two hours at any time during the period from December 5 to December 25, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers)

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing as below:

1. 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 the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and time, and the specimen collection points and time at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
2. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories recognised by the Department of Health (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf);
3. To attend any community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/);
4. To visit any mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
5. To undergo testing at any healthcare facilities of the Hospital Authority (including GOPCs and accident and emergency departments) as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the above specified premises by the CHP, and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per the relevant guidelines.

"If persons who are 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 community testing centres."

Persons who are subject to testing and opt for testing routes (1) to (5) above must keep the SMS (mobile phone text message) notification containing the result of the test, the Attendance Certificate, the Discharge Note, or the test report for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test. Persons who are subject to testing and opt for testing route (6) above must provide personal particulars (including name, identification document number and residential address) when required by a law enforcement officer for checking by the officer with the CHP. Furthermore, persons who are subject to testing 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.

If persons who are subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone the above mentioned test between December 21 and December 25, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901 which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons who are 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 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 notice. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice 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/her to undergo testing within a specified timeframe. 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.

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. The FHB will publish compulsory testing notices regarding particular groups when necessary taking into account the epidemic development and the testing participation rate."