

Government reminds public to utilise self-paid services at community testing centres for cross-boundary or cross-border travel

A Government spokesman said today (December 28) that apart from providing free testing services to those who are subject to compulsory testing and targeted groups which are required to undergo testing, the 19 community testing centres (CTCs) also have sufficient capacity to serve self-paid users. The public may make booking with any CTC that suits their needs to undergo self-paid test for general community or other private uses such as cross-boundary and cross-border travel (including the future application for Hong Kong Health Code).

The CTCs provide self-paid specimen collection services through combined nasal and throat swabs and COVID-19 reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing method. The charge of this self-paid service is capped at \$240. The contractor will issue within 24 hours the nucleic acid test report, which is also suitable for applying for the Hong Kong Health Code. The public are reminded that the time for contractors to issue the test reports may vary with regard to the time slots in which the specimens were collected. They may choose and make booking with the appropriate CTC for self-paid testing based on their own needs.

The Food and Health Bureau has all along been in close contact with the contractors so as to get well prepared for implementing the Hong Kong Health Code. At present, the 19 CTCs provide close to 40 000 online booking places per day. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information (including name, valid identification document number and contact phone number that can receive SMS) in the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) for selection of testing location and time slot.

"Those who need the test report for travel, including the future application for Hong Kong Health Code, have to fill in relevant travel information such as the Hong Kong and Macao Residents Entry and Exit Permit (Home Return Permit) or other travel documents when making an online booking. Moreover, they have to bring along original documents that are required for entry to the destination and the booking confirmation SMS to the CTC for registration so that the relevant identity number can be quoted on the test report," the spokesman reminded.

"Free test users will receive only SMS testing results but not any testing report or proof. The SMS cannot be used for cross-boundary or cross-border travel, including the application for the Hong Kong Health Code which allows exemption of quarantine for entry to the Mainland. Those who wish to undergo COVID-19 test to get the testing report for relevant purposes shall

use the self-paid testing service."

The booking system displays the booking status of each centre for the next two weeks, making it convenient for people to plan and choose the suitable location and time slot for testing. The CTCs will accord priority to provide service for individuals with advance booking. Before going to the CTC, one may give a call to ascertain the availability of booking and walk-in quotas. To shorten the onsite waiting time, citizens should make advance online booking as far as possible and input all required information beforehand.

The CTCs open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection is conducted during closure of the CTCs around noon and at night. For details of the locations, respective contractors and enquiry hotlines of the CTCs in service, please refer to www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info. Contactless payment means are provided by contractors as a measure to reduce the risk of virus spreading out. The Government encourages self-paid users to avoid using cash for payment.

The CTCs serve all asymptomatic individuals holding valid Hong Kong identity cards, birth certificates or other valid identity documents (including Hong Kong residents and non-Hong Kong residents). Symptomatic persons shall seek medical attention immediately and should not attend the CTCs. Self-paid users with a negative result will receive the test report for a COVID-19 nucleic acid test from contractors within 24 hours from the test. Those who tested positive will receive calls from the Department of Health (DH) to arrange for isolation and treatment in public hospitals.

All contractors of the CTC are laboratories on the list of "Local COVID-19 RT-PCR testing institutions recognised by the Hong Kong SAR Government" maintained by the DH. (Please refer to www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf for the List). Members of the public may self-arrange testing at these private laboratories to serve their general community or other private purposes. The Government will closely monitor the usage of the testing services and timely adjust the arrangements.