

Government revokes "restriction-testing declaration" in respect of specified "restricted area" in Sha Tin (with photo)

The Government yesterday (October 7) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 7pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sha Tin (i.e. Golden Glory Court, Phase 1, Golden Lion Garden, 5-7 Chui Tin Street, Sha Tin) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. In addition, the Government had issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the building for more than two hours from September 15 to October 7, 2021, to undergo compulsory testing on or before October 9, 2021 even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. Due to the inclement weather, the Government announced at around 5.45am today (October 8) that the compulsory testing exercise has finished after receiving the test results of persons subject to compulsory testing. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 1am today. As at 1am today, around 400 residents had undergone testing. No confirmed cases were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 200 households, among which 24 households did not answer the door. Those may include some households undergoing quarantine or isolation. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and will take measures to follow up. The Government hopes that the household who have not answered the door will contact the Government for arrangement of testing as soon as possible after reading the notices put up by the Government, in the hope of eliminating the possible risk of further spread of the virus in the community.

The Government also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or by other means. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from October 5 to 7, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the

test results, are not required to take the test again.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the Sha Tin District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department mobilised around 170 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including bottled water, canned food and cup noodles, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing. One box of masks was also provided to each person subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the results at home.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will 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 or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

