

Government to gazette compulsory testing notice

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

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said today (December 26), "Upon contact tracing by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), a number of confirmed cases not epidemiologically linked to each other were recently found at Lei Sang House of Lei Yue Mun Estate, 33 Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong within a short period of time. Members of the public who had been to the relevant place might be subject to higher infection risks. The Government will publish a compulsory testing notice under Cap. 599J, which requires persons who had been to the above premises during the specified period to undergo testing immediately."

"The Government published on December 15 and December 16 two compulsory testing notices, requiring any person who had been present at Ming Lai House of Choi Wan (II) Estate, 55 Clear Water Bay Road, Wong Tai Sin and Ming Yan Lau of Jat Min Chuen, 17 Jat Min Chuen Street, Sha Tin for more than two hours during the specified periods to undergo testing by December 20 and December 21 respectively. In view of the possible long incubation period of the virus, the relevant persons have to undergo a second test."

"Based on the recent experience, persons subject to compulsory testing would feel more relieved if they receive SMS (mobile phone text message) confirming the negative result of the tests. Such SMS can also facilitate law enforcement. Therefore, the Government has updated the testing routes applicable to compulsory testing notices, which only include those where SMS confirming negative test results would be issued to persons who underwent testing afterwards."

Details of persons subject to compulsory testing are as follows:

1. Any person who had been present at Lei Sang House of Lei Yue Mun Estate, 33 Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong, for more than two hours at any time during the period from November 24 to December 26, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to undergo testing by December 31, 2020;
2. Any person who had been present at Ming Lai House of Choi Wan (II) Estate, 55 Clear Water Bay Road, Wong Tai Sin, for more than two hours at any time during the period from November 20 to December 15, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to undergo testing during the period from December 27 to December 29, 2020;

3. Any person who had been present at Ming Yan Lau of Jat Min Chuen, 17 Jat Min Chuen Street, Sha Tin, for more than two hours at any time during the period from December 1 to December 16, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to undergo testing during the period from December 27 to December 29, 2020.

If persons subject to compulsory testing under group (1) have previously undergone the above mentioned test between December 22 and December 26, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice. If persons subject to compulsory testing under groups (2) and (3) have previously undergone the above mentioned test between December 24 and December 26, they would also be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

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

1. 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;
2. To attend any 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 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);
4. To undergo testing at any GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health 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)

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at accident and emergency departments of Hospital Authority or during hospital stay, using specimen bottles distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of compulsory testing notices.

"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 the 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 notice 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 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."