

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 nine specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

Currently, in all districts in Hong Kong, if one or more new confirmed cases are found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses), or there are sewage samples tested positive, or there are other factors which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice. For testing targeting at workplaces, if one or more confirmed cases are found in a workplace, it will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

In view of the confirmed cases announced today (April 16), three premises fulfilling the above criteria and a school attended by a confirmed case are included in the compulsory testing notice. In addition, in view of the preliminary positive cases recorded by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) today, five residential buildings are also covered in the compulsory testing notice.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "Generally speaking, the Government will issue compulsory testing notice to cover the buildings related to the cases confirmed on the same day. However, as a few local preliminary positive cases with unknown sources were recorded today which may be a sign of rebound in the epidemic, under the new direction in fighting the pandemic, we have decided to include in the compulsory testing notice the buildings where the relevant cases reside in advance as far as practicable, in order to break the transmission chain in the community early in a targeted manner, with a view to staying ahead of the epidemic."

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

1. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part A of Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from April 3 to April 16, 2021 (including but not limited to residents, visitors and workers), has to undergo testing by April 18, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 14 and April 16, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.
2. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part B of Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from April 3 to April 16, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 18, 2021. If

persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 14 and April 16, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

3. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part C of Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from April 3 to April 16, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff, students and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 18, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 14 and April 16, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

The spokesman reminded the public that in accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, has to undergo testing within two days of him or her becoming aware that the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations tomorrow (April 17) for persons subject to compulsory testing:

- Square next to Lok Wah North Estate Bus Terminus, Kwun Tong
- 15-17 Mody Road, Tsim Sha Tsui
- G/F, Block 11, Meadowlands, Hung Shui Kiu
- Hall of Butterfly Bay Community Centre, Tuen Mun
- Open space outside the side exit door of Oi Fai House (Block 2), Yau Oi Estate, Tuen Mun

The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Edinburgh Place in Central, Wong Tai Sin Square, Sha Tsui Road Playground in Tsuen Wan, On Hing Playground in Yuen Long, Tin Shui Sports Centre in Tin Shui Wai and Kin Sang Community Hall in Tuen Mun will be extended to April 25 (Sunday). The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Tai Po Community Centre and Tung Chung North Park will be extended to April 30 (Friday).

The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in Annex 2. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres across the territory to receive testing free of charge. Persons with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive

free testing at community testing centres or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable).

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

1. To visit any of the 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 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 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);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health (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); or
6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, 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 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 notices 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 available 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 notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices 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 or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. 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.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to the DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purposes as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

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."