

Government to gazette compulsory testing notice and specifications under Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation

The Government will exercise the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and gazette a compulsory testing notice and specifications, which require any person who had been present at 26 specified premises during the specified period and foreign domestic helpers (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test, and continue to empower a registered medical practitioner to require any person whom he clinically suspects has contracted COVID-19 to undergo a test during a period of 14 days from May 1 to May 14, 2021.

Compulsory testing notice

In view of the local cases with unknown sources of infection involving N501Y mutant strain, we need to require any person who had been present at the relevant specified premises during the specified period to undergo a second test or a third test respectively. In addition, since there have been foreign domestic helpers confirmed positive involving N501Y mutant strain recently, all foreign domestic helpers are required to undergo compulsory testing.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "As N501Y mutant strain is with high transmissibility, for prudence's sake, the relevant persons who had been to the places patronised by the local cases with unknown sources of infection involving N501Y mutant strain are required to undergo three tests and all foreign domestic helpers are required to undergo testing to completely cut any possible transmission chain."

In addition, since there were outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) in 11 schools, and the symptoms of URTI are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, these 11 schools are also covered in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notices are at Annex 1. Foreign domestic helpers are required to undergo testing on or before May 9. The rest of the persons subject to compulsory testing (unless otherwise specified in Part C2 of Annex 1) should undergo testing on or before May 3. Persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notices.

Furthermore, taking into account that a number of specified premises are

covered in the compulsory testing notices recently, regarding the compulsory testing notice on April 29, the testing deadline for persons subject to compulsory testing who had been present at the 14 specified premises listed in that notice will be extended by one day from May 1 to May 2, in order to facilitate the members of the public to undergo compulsory testing.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau 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/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 reopen/set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations on May 1 for persons subject to the third testing:

- Outside Central Pier No.5
- Gloucester Road Garden (outside Immigration Tower), Wan Chai
- Ocean Centre Carpark in Tsim Sha Tsui
- Cheung Chau Sports Centre

The Labour Department and the Food and Health Bureau will set up mobile specimen collection stations on May 1 to 2 at popular gathering places of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to provide a free COVID-19 testing service for FDHs:

- Chater Road Pedestrian Precinct in Central (near the bus stop)
- Hing Fat Street entrance of Victoria Park in Causeway Bay (near Exit A2 of MTR Tin Hau Station)
- Lai Chi Kok Park entrance (near Exit D of MTR Mei Foo Station)
- Tsuen Wan Park entrance (near Exit D of MTR Tsuen Wan West Station).

In addition, the Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations on May 1 for persons subject to compulsory testing (including FDHs):

- Kennedy Town Playground
- Tamar Park
- Carpark of Quarry Bay Community Hall
- Siu Sai Wan Community Hall
- Kwun Tong Recreation Ground

- 557 Shanghai Street, Mong Kok (opposite to Langham Place)
- Lai Kok Community Hall, Cheung Sha Wan
- Kwai Chung Sports Ground
- Amphitheatre, Hong Kong Velodrome Park in Tseung Kwan O
- Mau Tai Road Garden in Po Lam

The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Citygate and Fu Tung Estate in Tung Chung will be extended to May 2 (Sunday) and May 4 (Tuesday) respectively. The service period of the mobile specimen collection station at Maple Street Playground in Sham Shui Po will be extended to May 9 (Sunday). The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Wong Tai Sin Square and Plaza of Sha Tin Town Hall will be extended to May 16 (Sunday). The Government will continue to review the usage and public demand for the testing service, and make suitable adjustments to the relevant service.

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 in all districts 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/.

Relevant specifications for compulsory testing for persons clinically suspected to have contracted COVID-19

According to expert advice, compulsory testing for symptomatic patients can effectively slow down the transmission of the virus by early identification, early isolation and early treatment. To keep the epidemic situation under control, the Government considers it necessary to continue to solicit help from medical practitioners in identifying possibly infected persons as soon as possible.

During the period of 14 days from May 1 to May 14, 2021, registered medical practitioners may, by a written direction, require a person whom the medical practitioner attends to in the course of professional practice and clinically suspects to have contracted COVID-19 to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test. Persons who receive the written direction (persons who are subject to testing under written directions) should undergo a test within two days after the issue date of the written direction (the testing deadline).

Persons who are subject to testing under written directions may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(1) To use the specimen bottle provided by the registered medical practitioner who issued the written direction to collect a deep throat saliva specimen and submit the specimen bottle to designated specimen collection points by the testing deadline (see the specimen collection points and time at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html). Having reported the case

to the DH, the registered medical practitioner who issued the written direction will be notified of the test result; or
(2) To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories recognised by the DH (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf) by the testing deadline and submit the test result to the medical practitioner who issued the written direction or his clinic staff by electronic mail, fax, or by hardcopy within four days after the testing deadline.

For example, if the written direction is issued on Monday, the person subject to testing under the written direction should undergo a test via one of the above options on or before Wednesday, the testing deadline. If the test result of the specimen is preliminary positive, the specimen will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the DH for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

"Persons who are subject to testing under written directions are suspected to be infected and should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres for testing. To reduce transmission risk, relevant persons who underwent testing are advised to stay at home and avoid going out when waiting for test results."

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 DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purpose 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."