

Government to gazette compulsory testing notices

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 compulsory testing notices, which require any person who had been present at seven specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said today (January 12), "The Government published on January 8, 2021, a compulsory testing notice, requiring any person who had been present at 26 Reclamation Street, Jordan, for more than two hours during the specified period to undergo testing by January 11, 2021. Since 20, 22 and 24 Reclamation Street are interconnected with 26 Reclamation Street and the communal places are shared by some residents therein, with confirmed cases found in individual buildings above, the Government will also cover the above buildings in compulsory testing to cut the transmission chain in the community as soon as possible.

"In the past few days, the Community Testing Centre located in the nearby Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre has been providing free testing services for residents of 20, 22, 24 and 26 Reclamation Street. If the relevant persons have previously undergone testing between January 8 and January 12, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice, and do not need to undergo a second test.

"In addition, the Government published a compulsory testing notice earlier, requiring any person who had been present at Kam Shek House, Lam Shek House and Wong Shek House of Ping Shek Estate during the specified period to undergo testing by January 4, 2021. As the sewage samples in the relevant buildings constantly tested positive, there might be cases not found in the first compulsory testing. Accordingly, the relevant persons have to undergo a second test, similar to the situation earlier in Fung Chak House of Choi Wan (II) Estate."

Details of persons subject to compulsory testing are as follows:

(1) Any person who had been present at any of the following specified premises for more than two hours at any time during the period from December 30, 2020, to January 12, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by January 15, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 8 and January 12, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

1. 20 Reclamation Street, Jordan

2. 22 Reclamation Street, Jordan
3. 24 Reclamation Street, Jordan
4. 26 Reclamation Street, Jordan

(2) Any person who had been present at any of the following specified premises for more than two hours at any time during the period from December 30, 2020, to January 12, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing during the period from January 12 to January 15, 2021.

1. Kam Shek House of Ping Shek Estate, 2 Clear Water Bay Road, Kwun Tong
2. Wong Shek House of Ping Shek Estate, 2 Clear Water Bay Road, Kwun Tong
3. Lam Shek House of Ping Shek Estate, 2 Clear Water Bay Road, Kwun Tong

"Based on recent experience, persons subject to compulsory testing would feel more relieved if they receive SMS (mobile phone text message) notifications confirming the negative results of the tests. Such SMS notifications can also facilitate law enforcement. Therefore, the Government has updated the testing routes applicable to compulsory testing notices, which only include those where SMS notifications confirming negative test results would be issued to persons who underwent testing afterwards. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge."

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 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 Centre for Health Protection (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per the 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 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 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 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.

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 developments and the testing participation rate."