

Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan markets to conduct thorough cleaning and disinfection tomorrow

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 6) said that the University of Hong Kong (HKU) has completed its testing of the environmental swabs taken from Hung Hom Market and To Kwa Wan Market on August 4, with all samples tested negative for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). To further improve the environmental hygiene of the two markets, the FEHD will work with market stall tenants to conduct a clean-up (including clearing of disused articles) and a thorough cleaning and disinfection (including at market stalls and communal areas) again tomorrow (August 7). It is expected that the two markets will be reopened on August 8 (Saturday).

In view of recent COVID-19 cases found to be related to Hung Hom Market and To Kwa Wan Market, for prudence's sake, the FEHD has temporarily suspended operation of the two markets for carrying out thorough cleaning and disinfection work. The FEHD was notified by HKU yesterday (August 5) that its testing work of the environmental swabs taken from the two markets has been completed and all the samples were tested negative for the COVID-19 virus.

Moreover, since late July, the FEHD has progressively arranged a voluntary one-off free COVID-19 testing service for operators of market stalls and personnel working in markets. Earlier on, the testing agency had distributed specimen bottles to operators of market stalls (including fish stalls that have been let) or personnel working in Hung Hom Market and To Kwa Wan Market, and the testing work has mostly been completed. The agency will strive to complete the remaining testing work as soon as possible.

The FEHD has conducted thorough cleaning and disinfection work during the markets' suspension of operation in order to safeguard the health and safety of market stall tenants and the public. To further improve the environmental hygiene of the two markets, the FEHD will conduct another round of thorough cleaning and disinfection of communal areas and facilities in the markets tomorrow (August 7) and market stall tenants will also clean and disinfect their own stalls. In addition, the department will conduct deep cleaning work on the periphery of the markets and nearby streets, and enhance anti-rodent measures in Hung Hom Market and To Kwa Wan Market, including conducting a three-month intensive anti-rodent operation, during which market staff will thoroughly clear the refuse and clean the passages and drains in the markets every night after the markets are closed so as to eliminate the food sources of rodents. Plentiful traps will also be placed in market areas extensively in the small hours in order to strengthen rodent control.

Hung Hom Market and To Kwa Wan Market are expected to re-open on August 8 (Saturday). The FEHD will, in accordance with the advice of the Chair

Professor of the Department of Microbiology, HKU, Professor Yuen Kwok-yung, strictly require market patrons to take body temperature check and use alcohol handrub to clean their hands before entering the markets, and to comply with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap.599I) to wear a mask in the markets. The FEHD will continue to closely monitor the situation of the markets, strive to step up anti-epidemic measures in markets, and to conduct deep cleaning and disinfection work if necessary so as to maintain environmental hygiene.

The spokesman said that the FEHD attaches importance to the hygienic condition of public markets and will continue to strengthen anti-epidemic measures and cleaning and disinfection work in light of the developments of the epidemic. Leveraging technology for carrying out the work is also under active exploration by the department. Earlier on, face masks and disinfectant hand sanitisers have also been distributed by the department to market stall tenants. The spokesman strongly appealed to market stall operators and personnel working therein to comply with government regulations to wear a mask in the markets and maintain personal and environmental hygiene so as to protect the health and safety of market stall tenants and the public.