

Labour Department arranges from today onwards COVID-19 testing service for foreign domestic helpers staying in boarding facilities of employment agencies

The Labour Department (LD) arranges from today (August 9) onwards a free, one-off COVID-19 testing service for all foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) staying in boarding facilities of employment agencies (EAs). The testing agency (Prenetics Limited) will deliver in batches specimen bottles to licensed EAs providing boarding facilities to FDHs for collecting deep throat saliva samples from the relevant FDHs.

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ã€€ã€€An LD spokesman said, "The Government announced on August 6, 2020 that the scope of the COVID-19 testing for target groups would be expanded to FDHs staying in EAs' boarding facilities. A free, one-off COVID-19 testing service provided by a testing agency will be arranged for the relevant FDHs."

ã€€ã€€The spokesman continued, "There are at present around 1 200 EAs with main licences providing FDH placement services. LD has been actively contacting these EAs to confirm which of them provide boarding facilities to FDHs. LD will arrange the testing agency to distribute specimen bottles to the EAs concerned for collecting deep throat saliva samples from the relevant FDHs and collect the specimens in the subsequent one to two days for testing. Cases with a positive result will be relayed to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health for follow-up. EAs should fill out a form and pass to LD relevant information such as the number of FDHs that have been tested. The testing agency will pass the testing record form to EAs along with the specimen bottles. EAs shall submit the testing record form to LD on the day the testing agency collects the specimens or the day after."

"The testing agency will work closely with LD and determine the testing priority based on the number of persons staying in an EA boarding facility, manpower resources available, etc. The testing agency will contact the relevant EAs before sending staff there so that the EAs can make arrangements. The virus testing is voluntary."

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ã€€ã€€LD appeals to the relevant FDHs to actively participate in the testing scheme and continue to maintain personal and environmental hygiene. LD also urges EAs to strengthen health protection in their boarding facilities. EAs can make reference to CHP's "Guidelines on Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) for the General Public"

(www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/nid_guideline_general_public_en.pdf) and "A Guide to Personal, Home and Environmental Hygiene"

(www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/a_guide_to_personal_home_and_environmental_hygiene_keep_clean_be_healthy_booklet.pdf).

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ã€€ã€€For details on the testing scheme, please call the hotline of the testing agency (Prenetics Limited) at 3008 8319 or contact LD through its dedicated email account for FDH matters (fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk).