

Labour Department continues to arrange free COVID-19 testing service for foreign domestic helpers waiting to join new employers' family

The Labour Department (LD) announced today (October 22) that the free COVID-19 testing service will continue to be provided for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) waiting to join their new employers' family from October 27 to November 21, 2020.

An LD spokesman said, "In view of confirmed infection cases of FDHs who had stayed in boarding facilities, the Government provided a free COVID-19 testing service from August 25 to October 15 for FDHs whose previous employment contracts had expired or had been terminated and who were waiting to join the new employers' family. These FDHs are most likely to be staying in boarding facilities while waiting to change employers. To benefit more FDHs, the LD will once again arrange a free COVID-19 testing service for these FDHs. We strongly encourage FDHs staying in boarding facilities while waiting to change employers to actively participate in the free testing to safeguard their health. If an FDH needs to stay in a boarding facility for an extended period of time while waiting to change employer, he or she may retake the test as appropriate, especially before joining the new employer's family. We appeal for employment agencies' active assistance in arranging for FDHs to collect specimen collection packs at the temporary distribution/collection point and to return the specimens for testing. We also advise employers to check that their new FDHs have a valid negative test result before joining the family."

Eligible FDHs may, starting from October 27, collect and return specimen collection packs at the temporary distribution/collection point located at 1/F (footbridge level), Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai. No prior appointment is required. The temporary distribution/collection point will be open from 11am to 4pm from Monday to Saturday. The testing is free of charge.

When distributing specimen collection packs, duty officers will ask for simple information regarding the eligibility of the FDH for the testing service, e.g. the Hong Kong identity card number and/or passport number, the reference number and limit of stay as shown on the latest visa issued by the Immigration Department (ImmD), or the reference number/date of application for a visa/extension of stay as a visitor as shown on documents issued by the ImmD. The FDH should bring along the relevant documents for a smooth identity verification process. He or she will be asked to sign a consent form to give consent to taking the test and confirm his or her eligibility for the testing service. After collecting the specimen collection pack, the FDH is required to register his or her personal information at a government website

(www.tgptest.gov.hk, please select "Non-Government Staff – Foreign domestic helpers waiting to join new employers' family") in order to receive SMS notification of the testing result. If necessary, duty officers can assist the FDH in registration. The FDH should self-collect the deep throat saliva specimen and return it to the temporary collection point on the same day of self-collection.

The testing agency will deliver the specimens to the laboratory for testing. The testing agency will not acquire or retain any personal information of the participants. Participants will be notified of a negative test result via SMS. Positive cases will be referred to the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH) for follow-up and the DH will contact the participant concerned if it is confirmed to be an infection case.

For enquiries, please contact the LD through the dedicated FDH hotline at 2157 9537 (manned by 1823) or by email to fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk.