

SDEV visits construction site to learn about Construction Industry COVID-19 Testing Service Scheme (with photos)

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, visited a construction site at Muk Yuen Street in Kai Tak today (January 28) to learn about the testing arrangement for construction workers under the Construction Industry COVID-19 Testing Service Scheme and to inspect the preventive measures against COVID-19 adopted at the site. Mr Wong visited the site together with the Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), Mr Lam Sai-hung; the Chairman of the Construction Industry Council (CIC), Mr Chan Ka-kui; the Executive Director of the CIC, Mr Albert Cheng; and the President of the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA), Mr Allan Chan.

"We are grateful for the construction industry's relentless effort in fighting the epidemic by taking the initiative to launch this industry-led testing scheme," Mr Wong said. "As the industry is familiar with the surroundings and operations at sites, the implementation of the Scheme has taken full account of the actual operational needs at the sites. When a worker preliminarily tests positive for the virus, the main contractor can quickly arrange site disinfection and follow-up work. This helps prevent an outbreak."

Mr Chan Ka-kui said, "Through the arrangement by the CIC and the HKCA for a professional testing service provider to conduct on-site testing services, time and resources could be saved in collecting and returning the specimens, thereby providing convenience for the workers to undergo the tests. The active participation of main contractors, subcontractors and workers demonstrates the solidarity of the construction industry and their determination to fight the epidemic together."

Mr Allan Chan added, "In addition to the Scheme, we have also established inspection teams to review the preventive measures adopted at various construction sites, such as management of site entrances, provision of ventilation facilities and arrangement of resting areas, and to offer recommendations for improvement. We hope all main contractors will continue to strengthen the preventive measures on-site, and at the same time improve the workers' awareness of epidemic prevention, so that everyone can work at ease."

The Legislative Council (LegCo) member for the Architectural, Surveying, Planning and Landscape functional constituency, Mr Tony Tse, and the LegCo member for the Engineering functional constituency, Dr Lo Wai-kwok, also joined the visit.

In view of the severity of the COVID-19 epidemic, the CIC and the HKCA, with support from the Development Bureau, jointly launched the Scheme on

December 22 last year to provide on-site testing services to further strengthen the preventive measures at construction sites. The Scheme has so far provided testing services to over 22 000 workers at 93 sites and 99.98 per cent of their test results were negative. Four confirmed cases have been identified so far and were handled by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health according to the established mechanism. The contractors concerned were also notified promptly that there were confirmed cases at their sites and arranged follow-up work accordingly.

The Scheme arranges for a professional testing service provider to visit both public and private construction sites and provide voluntary COVID-19 testing for construction workers and site personnel. With the subsidy provided by the CIC and the HKCA, developers/main contractors only need to pay part of the testing fee to offer testing services to workers and site staff who voluntarily join the Scheme.

Application for the Scheme will close on January 31. Main contractors who are interested in participating are required to return completed application forms as soon as possible for arranging testing services. The application form can be downloaded from the CIC website (www.cic.hk/CITS).

Apart from the Scheme, the Government is also providing a one-off free COVID-19 voluntary testing service to all registered construction workers through Community Testing Centres until January 31. Interested workers can register via the Community Testing Centres' booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk).

