

Transcript of remarks by SEN, SFH and SHA at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing; the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan; the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui; and the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, at a media session this morning (January 23) on the compulsory testing in "restricted area":

Reporter: My first question is relating to arrangement. I talked to some people in the area earlier this morning. Some are complaining that they were outside and weren't able to go home. Given that they have to undergo test anyway, why aren't they allowed home? There are also people who own stores in the area saying that they could not deliver their order because they can't go into the area, and some have left their frozen meat to go stale because they couldn't go into the area. What should they do and will there be a compensation for these people? And the second question is relating to risk assessment. I walked around this morning and I noticed that some of the government workers standing guard are wearing the same level of masks that I'm wearing but they are speaking to residents in the area as well. So will they be a concern or a risk of the disease being spread? If they are not quarantined as well, will they bring the virus back to society?

Secretary for Home Affairs: For the residents who reside in this area, we will make necessary arrangements for them. When they enter this area, they are required to do the necessary testing before they can leave the area. For the colleagues already on ground, if the duty is to engage residents, you can see most of them are required higher degree of protection and we will provide all that to them. In past exercises, if needed, we will provide testing to all of them as well. I'll see if my colleague has anything to supplement.

Secretary for Food and Health: As far as the risk assessment and the proper protective gears are concerned, I would like to invite the Director of Health to give us more information. The Department of Health has actually issued guidelines for the people who are working within the area and people who are taking swab and the workers within the area. They will follow the guidelines issued by the Department of Health.

Director of Health: In planning the operation, the Infection Control Branch of the Centre for Health Protection has worked with various departments. Upon understanding the roles of different officers performing different duties, different levels of PPE will be recommended. For those who have to enter a premise, they will be provided with full PPE including wearing surgical masks, goggles, gloves and overalls. So we will recommend different levels of protection for officers undergoing different levels of duties.

Reporter: What about the compensation? Will there be a compensation for shop owners?

Secretary for Home Affairs: Currently we focus on making sure all in the area are tested. We would like to minimise the inconvenience that will be caused to the residents and then the store owners. That's why we would like to make sure that this operation can finish in 48 hours.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)