

CHP follows up on three cases tested positive and 13 cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus related to Yat Kwai House of Kwai Chung Estate

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 21) said in view of the recently occurred three cases tested positive (cases 13085, 13090 and 13100) and 13 cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus related to Yat Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung, which involved 12 units on 11 floors facing 10 different directions, the CHP is proactively following up to investigate whether the infections of the cases that tested preliminarily positive are related to the cases that tested positive earlier, so as to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus.

The 16 cases involved 15 residents and a security guard working in morning shift at that building. Due to the emergence of numerous cases that tested positive and preliminarily positive at the building, the CHP co-ordinated with related government departments and experts and conducted a site inspection yesterday evening (January 20) at Yat Kwai House, including the floors and units concerned, to investigate and examine if environmental factors were involved in the infection of those cases. After analysing the environmental factors at scene and the latest epidemiological information, experts agreed that no building structure, air flow and pipe issues are involved in the transmission of virus.

Further epidemiological information revealed that an earlier case 13064 went to Yat Kwai House, Chin Kwai House and Luk Kwai House of Kwai Chung Estate on January 13, and stayed in the garbage room of the buildings concerned. Experts preliminarily opined that case 13064 spread the virus to relevant workers or residents of that building during his stay at Yat Kwai House.

Experts believed that no building structure problems leading to current virus transmission and there is no need to evacuate all residents for compulsory quarantine at this stage. The CHP decided to carry out prudent measures on infection control. The Government will make a "restriction-testing declaration" at Yat Kwai House and arrange all residents to carry out daily compulsory testing starting from today to January 23. Arrangements have been made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Residents would also need to complete the remaining three tests after January 23 in accordance with the compulsory testing notice.

For any person who had been present at Chin Kwai House and Luk Kwai House of Kwai Chung Estate for more than two hours at any time during the period from January 13 to 20 (including but not limited to residents, visitors and workers), they have to undergo testing according to the relevant compulsory testing notice.

The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they have complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.