

FHB encourages foreign domestic helpers to make use of free COVID-19 testing service

The Government has been providing one-off free COVID-19 testing service to all foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong since December 18, 2020. As at today (January 14), over 25 000 FDHs have made use of the free testing service at the community testing centres. The community testing centres will continue to offer free testing service to FDHs until January 31.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "with the prolonged local COVID-19 epidemic situation, the number of confirmed cases has remained at a relatively high level. Some of the confirmed cases have been asymptomatic, indicating the existence of many silent transmission chains within the community. Guided by the 'targeted testing' approach, the Government has been arranging testing for various targeted groups based on risk assessment. The free testing arrangement for FDHs has so far identified seven positive cases, hence a positive rate of 0.03%. We encourage FDHs to actively participate in the free test to safeguard their health and that of their employers' families. We also appeal to employers of FDHs to actively assist in arranging FDHs to make use of the free service."

FDHs should make advance booking for the free testing service via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). Those who did not make an appointment will need to pay for the testing service at \$240.

The community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when they close in the afternoon and at night. When arriving at the community testing centre at the designated time slot, the FDH should present identity document used at the time of booking (such as Hong Kong identity card or passport) and the SMS booking confirmation for verification.

"FDHs can choose a suitable time slot for testing taking into account their own needs. If FDHs have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo free testing provided by the Government as instructed by a medical professional. They should not go to the community testing centres."

The free testing service is being offered from December 18, 2020 to January 31, 2021. During the period, each FDH can receive free testing service once only. Participants will be notified by SMS through their mobile phones if the test result is negative. Should any specimen is tested preliminary positive, it will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

In addition to attending the community testing centres for testing, FDHs can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including obtaining a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, MTR stations or designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points. For details on testing means other than community testing centres, please refer to following webpage:

www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html.

FDHs whose previous employment contracts have expired or have been terminated and who are waiting to join the new employers' families may also collect and return specimen collection packs at Labour Department's temporary distribution/collection point located on 1/F (footbridge level), Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai. No prior appointment is required. For details, please refer to Labour Department's announcement:

www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202012/24/P2020122300729.htm.