

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Yau Ma Tei (with photos)

â€‹The Government on January 26 exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 7pm, by which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Yau Ma Tei (i.e. 9-27 Pitt Street and 3 Tung On Street) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the arrangement by the Government. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aimed at finishing this exercise at around 6am today (January 27), in order to achieve the goal of zero cases in the district with concerted efforts. The Government announces the exercise finished at around 6am today.

The Government set up eight temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" on January 26 and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo rapid antigen test and to collect combined nasal and throat swabs samples at the stations to undergo COVID-19 virus test before midnight yesterday. Test results of the rapid antigen test are available in around 30 minutes.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and its Office of the Licensing Authority, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Yau Tsim Mong District Office and the Sham Shui Po District Office mobilised around 380 staff to arrange implementation of the declaration and notice.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including cup noodles, soup packs (pork or chicken), soy milk, canned pork ham and tuna fish, and bottled water, etc, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangement of some persons subject to compulsory testing. One box of masks and hand sanitizers, etc, were also provided to persons subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

Taking into consideration that there are a number of ethnic minorities in the "restricted area", the HAD has arranged 18 working staff who can speak Nepali, Urdu or Hindi to assist ethnic minorities to undergo testing in specimen collection stations and help explain the arrangement on the "restriction-testing declaration". In order to assist ethnic minorities in understanding the content of the declaration, the HAD had also produced leaflets in three more popular ethnic minority languages (Nepali, Urdu and

Hindi) for distribution to persons in the "restricted area". The HAD has also set up a dedicated hotline for ethnic minorities restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The other hotline set up by the HAD has handled around 26 enquiries in total on testing arrangement and testing area, etc.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupling with the tireless efforts from the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results. Taking into account of the above situation, the "restriction-testing declaration" has been revoked in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment). The Government had also announced that the exercise was ended at around 6am today, so as to allow residents enough time to get prepared to start getting to work in the morning.

During the effective period of the declaration, about 330 persons underwent testing, one confirmed case was found. The person with confirmed case and the relevant close contact have been hospitalised and transferred to quarantine centres respectively for follow up.

Besides, the Government visited 306 households, of which around 93 of them did not answer the door. Among these households, some live in buildings in the "restricted area" which have not been evacuated. Households with confirmed cases or undergoing quarantine may also be included. Some units are possibly vacant. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and will take measures to follow-up and trace households in the district which have not responded.

The Government understands that residents in the district are worried and anxious because of the increase in confirmed cases in recent days. Under the epidemic, businesses in the area have been hit hard and brought to a standstill. Residents' livelihood are also affected. The Government hopes this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains in the district and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

The Government expresses its gratitude to the persons subject to compulsory testing again for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the result at home. The Government also thanks all the participating Government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work, enabling the smooth implementation of the declaration within 11 hours, minimising inconvenience brought to the persons subject to compulsory testing.

The Government as a whole is united in fighting against the virus despite all the difficulties by providing testing for all the residents in the district within a short period of time, in the hope of achieving zero cases in the district.

The Government will strictly follow up on enforcement implementation. The Government also reminds persons who had been present in the "restricted

area" for more than two hours in the past 14 days, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to comply with the compulsory testing notices and undergo testing at testing centres as soon as possible for the sake of themselves and that of the others. Undergoing testing is a responsible act for oneself, his/her family and the community. Any person who breaches the "restriction-testing declaration" commits an offence and may be liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

