

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (October 30). They are, on Hong Kong Island, Hans Andersen Club Limited; in Kowloon, Hong Kong Employment Development Service Limited; and in the New Territories, Kwai Tsing Safe Community and Healthy City Association, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people distinguish between the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on October 30 is as follows:

Region	Name of organisation	Colour of collection bag	Colour of flag
Hong Kong Island	Hans Andersen Club Limited	Orange	White
Kowloon	Hong Kong Employment Development Service Limited	Orange	Blue Green
New Territories	Kwai Tsing Safe Community and Healthy City Association	Blue	Green

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities, including any updated information, covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_flagdays) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

Conditional free COVID-19 testing service continues for targeted groups

The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) announced today (October 29) that in view of the ongoing severe situation of COVID-19 infection around the world and the higher transmissibility of mutant strains which has a much faster rate of spread, the Government will continue to expand and strengthen the large-scale COVID-19 testing for groups of different risks, such that effective measures can be taken against the cases immediately to cut off transmission chains as quickly as possible.

The Government is progressively arranging various types of working staff with higher risk of exposure to the virus to undergo more frequent regular virus testing as a strengthened measure to guard against the importation of cases and the resurgence of local infections. The arrangement is applicable to all full-time and part-time staff of relevant industries. As the Government no longer accepts deep throat saliva specimen for compulsory or regular testing, the testing of all targeted group persons (whether they have completed a vaccination course or not) must be done by using combined nasal and throat swabs.

Eligible persons of the following high-risk and high-exposure groups can receive free tests at community testing centres (CTCs) with effect from November. Details of relevant testing arrangements are stated below:

- Starting October 20, the testing frequency for airport staff of targeted groups has been enhanced to once every three days;
- Starting November 3, working staff of CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations will be required to undergo testing once every three days (fully vaccinated persons) or on a daily basis (not fully vaccinated ones);
- Starting November 10, the testing frequency for working staff of designated quarantine hotels (DQHs), quarantine facilities and relevant designated transport will be increased to once every three days (fully vaccinated persons) or on a daily basis (not fully vaccinated ones);
- The testing frequency for designated staff of container terminals and shipping services will be increased to once every three days (fully vaccinated persons) or on a daily basis (not fully vaccinated ones). The arrangement will be implemented within November;
- Designated cold store practitioners will be required to undergo testing once every three days (fully vaccinated persons) or on a daily basis (not fully vaccinated ones). The arrangement will be implemented within November.

Persons of targeted groups eligible for receiving free COVID-19 testing at the CTCs are mainly those who are vaccinated or those who are unfit for vaccination because of health reasons. They must present valid medical certificates/vaccination records/documents of identity proof (Note) for

receiving free tests. This requirement is applicable to all targeted groups. In other words, persons of targeted groups will need to pay for the regular testing service if they do not fall under the category of being unfit for vaccination because of health reasons.

The specific requirements for eligible persons of various targeted groups (including testing frequency, specimen requirement, conditions for receiving free test) are set out in the Annex. They have to make bookings online (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) for receiving free testing service at the CTCs. Those who have no appointment or not meeting the eligibility/conditions will need to pay for the testing service at \$240. The free testing arrangement will be available until end of November.

Persons eligible for booking a free test every day (For fully vaccinated persons: every three days)

- Staff of DQHs, quarantine facilities and relevant designated transport
- Designated Staff of container terminals and shipping services
- Designated cold store practitioners
- Working staff of the CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations

Persons eligible for booking a free test every three days

- Airport staff of targeted groups
- Airport staff not under targeted groups (For fully vaccinated persons: every 14 days)

Persons eligible for booking a free test every seven days

- Staff of catering businesses and bars/pubs
- Staff of re-opened scheduled premises
- Practitioners working at Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH)

Persons eligible for booking a free test every 14 days

- Staff of designated scheduled premises and public and private swimming pools/beaches, and performers not wearing a mask in places of public entertainment and event premises (For staff of individual premises operating under certain modes or capacities: every seven days)
- Construction site personnel
- School staff

Other persons eligible for booking a free test

- Working staff accompanying and receiving local group tours (To undergo one test within seven days before the tour, and no more than one free test every seven days)
- Staff members of residential care homes for the elderly, residential care homes for persons with disabilities and nursing homes who are fully vaccinated can continue to receive a free test every seven days on a voluntary basis to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers

- Personnel working in markets, licensed hawkers and fully vaccinated practitioners working at SSSH can continue to receive a free test every 28 days on a voluntary basis to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers

The Government regularly reviews the coverage and frequency of targeted group testing and if such testing should be publicly funded based on the latest epidemic risk assessment. A spokesman for the FHB said that the provision of free tests for targeted groups involves the use of public resources. Given that the Government must uphold the principle of effective use of resources, public money should only be used to subsidise individual eligible persons for taking nucleic acid tests in very exceptional situations.

The spokesman reiterated that the two vaccines currently recognised in Hong Kong are safe and effective, giving protection to the vaccinated persons and those around them. The vaccines have been received by billions of people worldwide and getting vaccination is the best way to fight the virus. Except for those with contraindications, most people are fit for vaccination. Currently, all Hong Kong residents aged 12 or above are eligible for receiving free vaccination. The Government calls on the public to treasure the vaccine supply in Hong Kong and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Note:

- (i) Persons who are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination because of health reasons are required to present a relevant medical certificate;
- (ii) persons who are vaccinated (i.e. have received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, or received the second dose but not yet passed 14 days, or completed a vaccination course of two doses) should present relevant vaccination record (such as by downloading their electronic vaccination records or saving the printouts of their vaccination records to their mobile phones, or bringing along the printouts or copies of their vaccination records); and
- (iii) certain groups should also present card/letter/document proof issued by relevant organisations for verification of identity.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for 246 days since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 9 027 600 doses of vaccines have been administered under the Vaccination Programme. Details are as follows:

	Number of persons receiving Sinovac vaccine	Number of persons receiving BioNTech vaccine	Total number of doses
First vaccine dose	1 677 300	2 932 700	4 610 000
Second vaccine dose	1 616 800	2 800 800	4 417 600

* The numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.

In the 24 hours ending at 8pm today (October 29), about 9 900 persons have received vaccination. Details are as follows:

	Sinovac vaccine	BioNTech vaccine
Number of persons receiving first dose	1 800	3 200
Number of persons receiving second dose	2 000	2 900
Overall percentage of persons receiving vaccines at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs)	94%	89%

* The numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.

In the 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there was one case of ambulance transfer to hospital from a CVC. The person was sent to hospital after experiencing common side effects after vaccination and was in stable condition. The person was discharged.

[Use of "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app required on entering HAD and District offices and venues starting November 1](#)

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) announced today (October 29) the arrangement of using "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application when entering the HAD and District offices and venues starting from November 1. Except for exempted persons, all persons will be required to use the app to scan the venue QR code before they are allowed to enter the HAD offices and venues.

The new arrangement is applicable to the following HAD and District Office venues:

1. All community halls and community centres (including those used as temporary shelters);
2. Home Affairs Enquiry Centres;
3. Office of the Licensing Authority; and
4. Office of the Estate Beneficiaries Support Unit.

Under the new arrangement, persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, those with disabilities that render use of the app difficult will be exempted from the requirement of using the app when they enter the HAD offices and venues. Exemptions will also be granted to individual persons depending on the actual circumstances, including users of temporary shelters without smart phones. All exempted persons are required to complete a record form to register their names, the first four digits or letters of their identification documents, their contact numbers and the date and time of their visits. They are also required to present relevant identification documents for verification at the request of the staff on-site during registration. The staff will also verify the contact numbers by making phone calls.

As it will take time to verify personal particulars of exempted persons under the new arrangement, their waiting time for using public services or entering the relevant premises may be lengthened. The HAD suggests members of the public should arrive early and appeals for their understanding. The Department also encourages the exempted persons to use the app as far as possible to save time.

Arrangements on use of “LeaveHomeSafe” mobile app at FEHD venues starting from November 1

To follow up on the Government's latest anti-epidemic measures, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (October 29) that, starting from November 1 (Monday), members of the public will be required to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code before they are allowed to enter the FEHD's offices and indoor facilities (including public markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets).

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Under the new arrangement, persons who are aged below 12 or aged 65 or above, and those with disabilities that render use of the app difficult, are required to complete a prescribed form to register their names, the first four digits or letters of their

identification documents, their contact numbers and the date and time of their visits. They are also required to present relevant identification documents for verification by the staff on-site. The staff on-site will also verify the contact numbers by making phone calls on the spot."

Taking into consideration factors such as operational needs, actual situations and target customers, the FEHD will make the following special arrangements at some of its venues:

(1) Members of the public are not required to use the app before entering the FEHD's columbaria, gardens of remembrance, cemeteries, Gardens of Forever Love, refuse collection points, public bathhouses and public toilets. The "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR codes are still available at the venues for visitors' voluntary use, with a view to facilitating epidemiological investigations when necessary.

(2) Persons who are unable to use the app (such as those without smartphones) may complete the visitor registration form at the FEHD's crematoria and offices for application of burial services as an alternative of using the app.

The spokesman reminded members of the public, other than the abovementioned special arrangements, the requirements on the use of the app will be implemented at the FEHD's other offices and indoor facilities from November 1. As it takes time for the public to get used to the new measures, especially for its public markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets, the FEHD will focus on education and publicity, and offer technical support to those in need during the initial stage of the implementation of the requirement.

During the teething period, should individuals have genuine difficulties in using the app, the FEHD will handle it with a pragmatic and sensitive approach, such as allowing them to complete the visitor registration form as an alternative. As it will take time to register and verify personal particulars of the exempted persons, their waiting time for entering the venues may be lengthened. Also, they are required to maintain social distancing. The FEHD appeals for the understanding and co-operation of the members of the public.

The spokesman stressed that strictly enforcing the requirement of using the "LeaveHomeSafe" app and stepping up the verification of personal particulars can help the conduct of epidemiological investigations to protect the safety of members of the public and stakeholders of the premises. The FEHD calls on members of the public to download and use the app as soon as possible and appeals for their proactive co-operation with the staff on-site in respect of the directives given, so as to work in concert to minimise the risk of virus transmission.