

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Tsui Yue House, Tsui Ping (North) Estate, Kwun Tong

The Government today (May 29) 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 6pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwun Tong (i.e. Tsui Yue House, Tsui Ping (North) Estate, Kwun Tong, excluding Tsui Ping North Shopping Circuit, see Annex.) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around 11am tomorrow (May 30). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11.30pm today. Arrangements will be 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. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests that have been recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, will not be required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as

possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 11am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from May 23 to May 29, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before May 31, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. 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 compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Government follows up on positive results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing

The Government announced today (May 29) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department and the Drainage Services Department have been collecting sewage samples for virus

testing in all districts, and had detected positive results in some areas, indicating that there may be hidden cases in the premises within these areas.

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results with relatively high viral loads in the following areas, the Housing Department and the respective District Offices will commence distributing about 240 000 sets of the COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to residents, cleaning workers and property management staff working in the following areas for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identify infected persons:

- Kwun Tong District – Yue Man Centre, Hyde Towers, Fulrich Garden, Lai Yue Building, Bo Yan Building, Bo Fung Building, Champion Court, Yue Man Mansion, residential premises around Wan Hon Street and Shui Wo Street, residential premises around Tung Ming Street (see Annex)
- Kwai Tsing District – Lai King Estate, Highland Park, Yin Lai Court and Cheung On Estate
- Eastern District – Tung Hei Court, Hing Tung Estate, Tung Yan Court, Felicity Garden, Tung Lam Court and residential premises around Tai Shek Street and Shing On Street (See Annex)

Members of the public may refer to (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/rat/eng/rat.html) for enquiries relating to the use of the RAT kits.

When using an RAT kit, please pay attention to and follow the instructions from the manufacturer to perform the test and read the result properly. It is advisable to record the displayed result by taking a photo immediately after reading. Users should wash their hands before and after performing the tests, and avoid placing non-essential items within the specimen collection area. After completing the test, wrap and seal all components of the test kit carefully and dispose of them properly. If the household environment is contaminated during the specimen collecting process, disinfection should be conducted with 1 in 49 diluted bleach solution or 70 per cent alcohol.

People who obtained a positive result through an RAT for the first time can report via the online platform "Declaration System for individuals tested positive for COVID-19 using Rapid Antigen Test" (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If individuals encounter difficulties using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will contact the relevant person later to finish the report procedure.

Government fine-tunes testing arrangements for persons entering Hong Kong and updates penalty under flight suspension mechanism

The Government announced today (May 29), on the premise of maintaining the overall framework of stringent inbound prevention and control measures to guard against the importation of cases, the fine-tuned pre-departure and post-arrival nucleic acid testing arrangements applicable to persons boarding for Hong Kong from overseas places and Taiwan, and the updated penalty to be incurred by airlines for neglecting to verify the required documentation of persons boarding flights for Hong Kong and triggering the route-specific flight suspension mechanism. These will take effect from 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong time). The adjustments are made so as to reduce the impact on the journeys of persons coming to Hong Kong while continuing to firmly guard against the importation of cases.

Documentary proof of negative results of pre-departure nucleic acid tests

As COVID-19 nucleic testing services in many overseas places are being scaled back, inbound persons may find it difficult to confirm whether a local laboratory or healthcare institution conducting polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based nucleic acid tests is ISO 15189-accredited or recognised by the government of the place. Considering that these persons are still subject to "test-and-hold" arrangement and compulsory quarantine in designated quarantine hotels (DQHs) under closed-loop management, starting from 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong Time), inbound persons boarding flights from overseas places or Taiwan are only required to present when boarding the negative result proof of a PCR-based nucleic acid test conducted within 48 hours prior to scheduled time of departure and with samples collected by a laboratory or healthcare institution (proof of the 48-hour pre-departure nucleic acid test). They will no longer need to present the documentary proof of the ISO 15189 accreditation or recognition by the relevant authority of the government of the place of the laboratory or the healthcare institution.

Pre-departure PCR-based nucleic acid tests not required for inbound children aged below three

Similarly, as testing services in many overseas places have been scaled back, it has also become difficult for inbound persons to arrange pre-departure tests for young children. In this regard, starting from 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong Time), children aged below three who have stayed in overseas places or Taiwan will no longer be required to present the proof of the 48-hour pre-departure nucleic acid test when boarding. However, upon

arrival in Hong Kong, the young children will still be subject to PCR-based nucleic acid tests (normally conducted with stool samples) as per existing arrangement, and be transferred to DQHs for compulsory quarantine by designated transport under closed-loop management.

Pre-departure PCR-based nucleic acid tests not required for travellers transferring or transiting in Hong Kong

When the Omicron variant started to spread rapidly globally, as a measure to reduce importation risk, the Government required from December 8, 2021, the presentation by passengers transferring or transiting in Hong Kong of the proof of the pre-departure nucleic acid test when boarding a flight for Hong Kong. However, as the epidemic situation around the world further stabilises, and prevention and control measures have been strengthened at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) to ensure the segregation of travellers transferring or transiting in Hong Kong to lower the risk of transmission of cases into the community, the Government will lift the requirement for passengers transferring or transiting in Hong Kong to present proof of the 48-hour pre-departure nucleic acid test starting from 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong Time). The Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) will continue to implement relevant prevention and control measures for transfer or transit passengers waiting for their connecting flights at the HKIA. The Government will continue to implement the stringent quarantine and testing arrangements for inbound persons who will enter the community.

Pre-departure tests for recovered inbound persons previously infected with COVID-19

The presence of viral genome fragments inside the body of some recovered persons who had contracted COVID-19 may still be detectable through PCR-based nucleic acid tests. The Government earlier announced that under normal circumstances, for inbound persons who tested positive by nucleic acid tests with a low viral load during the "test-and-hold" arrangement at the HKIA or compulsory quarantine in DQHs and are recovered persons infected within 90 days, the Department of Health will, having regard to the data of the nucleic acid test results and recovery records, consider whether the persons concerned should not be classified as confirmed cases and be allowed to continue to stay in DQHs for compulsory quarantine instead of being transferred to community isolation facility hotels for compulsory isolation.

As the above situation may also occur to inbound persons when conducting their pre-departure PCR-based nucleic acid tests, the Government will provide an alternative pre-departure testing arrangement to recently recovered persons who were previously infected. Starting from 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong Time), for persons travelling to Hong Kong from overseas places or Taiwan that are recovered persons previously infected with COVID-19, they can be exceptionally allowed to board a flight for Hong Kong if they hold the following documentary proof to show that they were infected with the virus 14 to 90 days prior to boarding for Hong Kong and have recovered, and the result

of the rapid antigen test (RAT) conducted within 24 hours prior to boarding was negative.

(1) A certificate issued by a medical practitioner or a recovery record issued by relevant authorities in Chinese or English, showing that the person was infected with COVID-19 14 to 90 days prior to boarding for Hong Kong and has recovered (the personal information contained on the documentary must match that of the relevant inbound person);

(2) A test report in Chinese or English issued by a laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name of the relevant inbound person matching that in his or her valid travel document to show that:

(i) the relevant inbound person underwent a test for COVID-19, the sample for which was taken from the relevant inbound person within 24 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the specified aircraft;

(ii) the test conducted on the sample was a RAT for COVID-19;

(iii) the relevant inbound person was tested negative for COVID-19; and
(3) If the relevant test report is not in Chinese or English or does not contain all of the above information, a written confirmation in Chinese or English issued by the laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name of the relevant inbound person matching that in his or her valid travel document and setting out all of the above information. The said written confirmation should be presented together with the test report.

Post-arrival testing arrangements for persons entering Hong Kong

Currently, for all persons arriving in Hong Kong who have stayed in overseas places or Taiwan, apart from a PCR-based nucleic acid test conducted on the fifth day of arrival in Hong Kong during compulsory quarantine in DQHs, they must also undergo a PCR-based nucleic acid test on the 12th day of arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of whether they have been discharged early from compulsory quarantine. In order to enhance the health surveillance of persons arriving in Hong Kong who have been discharged early from compulsory quarantine in DQHs, and to detect and isolate infected persons earlier, all relevant persons arriving in Hong Kong on or after 0.00am on May 24 (i.e. June 1 being the ninth day of arrival in Hong Kong) and being discharged early from compulsory quarantine will be required to undergo an additional compulsory testing on the ninth day of arrival in Hong Kong. In other words, if the relevant inbound person is discharged early from compulsory quarantine, in addition to being subject to daily RAT and PCR-based nucleic acid test on the fifth day of arrival in Hong Kong during compulsory quarantine in DQHs, after they are discharged early from compulsory quarantine, they will also be required to undergo compulsory PCR-based nucleic acid tests on the ninth and 12th days of arrival in Hong Kong at a community testing centre or a mobile specimen collection station, or arrange a self-paid test by professional swab sampling at a local healthcare institution recognised by the Government.

Updated penalty triggered by omission in checking under the route-specific flight suspension mechanism

On the premise of maintaining the measures to guard against the importation of cases, the Government has all along been requiring all airlines to stringently enforce the boarding requirements for inbound persons, in order to reduce the risk of importation of cases from specific high-risk places as far as practicable. The mechanism has been operating smoothly since May 1, while some individual routes have been suspended due to airlines' allowing passengers who did not comply with the requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to board. On the premise of the proper management of importation risks, as a way to encourage airlines to do their best in checking passengers' compliance of boarding conditions while avoiding the disruption to airlines' operations and the journeys of inbound persons, starting 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong Time), if it is the first instance within a 10-day period for a certain flight to trigger the mechanism due to passengers' non-compliance of the boarding conditions, the AAHK will issue a warning to that airline and impose a penalty of \$20,000. If the flights of the relevant route triggers the criterion again within 10 days, the passenger flights of that route run by the relevant airline from the same origin place will be prohibited from landing in Hong Kong for five days. If an airline refuses to pay for the penalty, the route will be prohibited from landing in Hong Kong when the relevant criterion is triggered in the first instance in accordance with the existing arrangement.

The Government will gazette the relevant updated specifications under Cap. 599H and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to effect the above measures from 0.00am on June 1 (Hong Kong Time) onwards.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation of different places in accordance with the principle of guarding against the importation of cases. A basket of factors, including public health factors such as epidemic situation in particular places, testing rate, vaccination rate, volume of arrivals and actual imported cases, as well as the developments of the local epidemic situation and relevant local socio-economic factors, will be considered under the risk-based principle to adjust the boarding, quarantine and testing requirements for overseas arrivals based on risk levels as the situation warrants.

Director-General of Investment Promotion visits Middle East and

Europe to promote Hong Kong's long-term business opportunities

â€‹The Director-General of Investment Promotion, Mr Stephen Phillips, today (May 29) started his duty visit to Doha, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Kuwait in the Middle East, and Amsterdam, Lisbon and Madrid in Europe as part of the latest efforts of Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) to promote Hong Kong's business attractions.

During the visit, Mr Phillips will meet with business leaders from various sectors including innovation and technology, financial services and family offices, fintech, business and professional services, tourism and hospitality, and transport, infrastructure and advanced manufacturing. He will also speak at three events in Abu Dhabi, Lisbon and Madrid, giving updates on Hong Kong's latest business environment and opportunities, highlighting the city's strategic role in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Mr Phillips said, "Hong Kong is an ideal location for overseas and Mainland companies, as well as entrepreneurs from around the world, as a base to set up or expand their business in Hong Kong, the GBA, China, and Asia more widely. The facts speak for themselves: in two surveys conducted last year, we saw a record number of businesses from overseas and the Mainland come to Hong Kong, as well as the largest number of start-ups in Hong Kong."

He added, "Hong Kong offers to companies a wide range of routes to growth opportunities. I look forward to sharing with representatives of companies and entrepreneurs the up-to-date and real situation in Hong Kong, and particularly how they can use Hong Kong to seize opportunities, including those arising from the GBA."

Murder and attempted suicide in Yuen Long

Police are investigating a murder and attempted suicide case in Yuen Long yesterday (May 28) in which a one-year-old boy died.

At 9.02pm yesterday, Police received a report from a 42-year-old man that his 42-year-old wife suspectedly attempted to commit suicide in a unit in Hong Shui House, Shui Pin Wai Estate. Their one-year-old son was in the unit. Officers sped to the scene and found the woman and the boy collapsed in bed. A basin of burned charcoal was found in the unit. They were sent to Pok Oi Hospital in unconscious state. The boy was certified dead at 10.19pm.

Initial investigation revealed that the woman had suspectedly burned charcoal in an attempt to kill herself and her son.

A will note and some pills in suspected connection with the case were seized at scene. Post-mortem examinations will be conducted later to ascertain the cause of the deceased.

Active investigation by the District Crime Squad of Yuen Long District is underway.