

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Chui Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung

The Government today (May 6) 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 3 pm under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Chui Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung. 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 noon tomorrow (May 7). 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 9 pm 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 three months, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not 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 noon 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 April 30 to May 6, 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 8, 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.

For the 2022 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE) candidates who are within the "restricted area" and need to sit the HKDSE on the following day, or examination personnel who need to take up invigilation duties for HKDSE on the following day, the Government appeals to them to go to the temporary specimen collection stations setup within the "restricted area" before 7 pm today and present to the prescribed officer the relevant documents (including the identification documents and HKDSE admission forms, or a certification letter issued by the school of the examination personnel) proving their identities. These HKDSE candidates and examination personnel will be given priority testing with a view to enabling them to obtain test results on the following day as early as possible. The priority testing arrangement also applies to the family members who live together with these HKDSE candidates and examination personnel, so as to identify those HKDSE candidates and examination personnel who have become close contacts of confirmed cases for making quarantine arrangement.

If any HKDSE candidate or examination personnel needs to leave the "restricted area" for the examination centre before the declaration is revoked, he/she can make a request to the prescribed officers within the "restricted area". The prescribed officer may allow the candidate or the examination personnel to leave the "restricted area" after verifying his/her testing result(s) and recording the relevant information. For the safety of all candidates and examination personnel, only those candidates and examination personnel who have obtained negative test results will be allowed to enter the examination hall. For details, please read the relevant information issued by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority earlier

www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/HKDSE/PPT_2022DSE_compulsory_testing_arrangements_eng.pdf.

The Housing Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2427 9006) which

started operation at 3 pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

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.

Temporary suspension of LCSD's Mobile Library 1, 6, 8 and 12 services

Mobile Libraries 1, 6, 8 and 12 will suspend services during designated periods in May and June for routine maintenance, a spokesman for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 6).

â€‹ Mobile Library 1 will suspend services from May 16 to 21. The affected service points are Whampoa Garden in Hung Hom, Riviera Gardens in Tsuen Wan, Shek Lei (I) Estate in Kwai Chung, Ko Yee Estate in Yau Tong, Kai Ching Estate in Kowloon City and Tsui Chuk Garden in Wong Tai Sin. For enquiries about Mobile Library 1 services, please call 2414 3157.

â€‹ Mobile Library 8 will suspend services from May 18 to 31. The affected service points are Choi Ying Estate in Kowloon Bay, Laguna City in Lam Tin, Hiu Lai Court and Po Tat Estate in Sau Mau Ping, Yau Lai Estate in Yau Tong, Tai Hang Tung Estate on Tai Hang Tung Road and Laguna Verde in Hung Hom. For enquiries about Mobile Library 8 services, please call 2926 3055.

â€‹ Mobile Library 6 will suspend services from May 23 to 28. The affected service points are Shau Kei Wan Market in Shau Kei Wan Main Street East, Lei Tung Estate and Ap Lei Chau Estate in Ap Lei Chau, the First Aid Station at Shek O Beach and Tsui Lam Estate in Tseung Kwan O. For enquiries about Mobile Library 6 services, please call 2505 4690.

â€‹ Mobile Library 12 will suspend services from May 30 to June 4. The affected service points are Kam Tsin Village and Tung Hing Road car park in Sheung Shui; Ka Fuk Estate in Fanling; Lei Muk Shue Estate, Bayview Garden and Sham Tseng Market Carpark in Tsuen Wan; Tai Wo Hau Estate in Kwai Chung;

and Fu Cheong Estate in Sham Shui Po. For enquiries about Mobile Library 12 services, please call 2479 1055.

â€‹ Readers are welcome to use other public libraries during the service suspension periods. They may also renew library materials by telephoning 2698 0002 or 2827 2833, or via www.hkpl.gov.hk.

Statistics on Code on Access to Information for third quarter of 2021

The Government received a total of 2 750 requests for information under the Code on Access to Information in the third quarter of 2021, a spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said today (May 6).

The total number of requests received since the introduction of the Code in March 1995 and up to the end of September 2021 amounted to 97 125. Of these, 5 559 requests were subsequently withdrawn by the requestors and 4 882 requests covered cases in which the bureaux/departments concerned did not hold the requested information or cannot confirm or deny the existence of information. As at September 30, 2021, 432 requests were still being processed by bureaux/departments.

Among the 86 252 requests which covered information held by bureaux/departments and which the bureaux/departments had responded to, 83 526 requests (96.8 per cent) were met, either in full (81 211 requests) or in part (2 315 requests), and 2 726 requests (3.2 per cent) were refused.

Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the response of a bureau/department under the Code may request that the matter be reviewed. He or she may also lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

In the third quarter of 2021, the Ombudsman received 19 complaints relating to requests for information. In this quarter, the Ombudsman concluded 28 complaints, among which one was substantiated, four were partially substantiated, four were unsubstantiated, 17 were concluded by inquiries (including three cases with inadequacies found), and two were assessed and closed. As at September 30, 2021, the Ombudsman's investigations on 15 complaints were ongoing.

"The Code has provided an effective framework for the public to seek access to information held by the Government," the spokesman said.

62nd and 63rd rounds of compulsory testing for staff members of RCHEs, RCHDs and nursing homes

The Government today (May 6) announced the details of the 62nd and 63rd rounds of compulsory testing for staff members of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and nursing homes.

In accordance with section 10(1) of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J), the Secretary for Food and Health issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday (May 5), requiring persons who are employed by and will be on duty at RCHEs, RCHDs, nursing homes and day service units attached to the premises of residential care homes during specified periods, or who will provide services to residents or users through hire-of-service contracts with residential care homes and the aforementioned units during specified periods (including full-time, part-time and relief staff), to undergo polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 according to the requirements and procedure set out in the notice (the Specified Test). The samples must be collected by using combined nasal and throat swabs and must not be taken by the person to be tested. The relevant details are set out below:

(1) Persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course and will be on duty or provide services from May 18 to 24, 2022, at the aforementioned residential care homes or units must undergo the Specified Test once during the period from May 11 to 24, 2022;

(2) Persons who have not completed a COVID-19 vaccination course and will be on duty or provide services from May 18 to 24, 2022, at the aforementioned residential care homes or units must undergo the Specified Test once during the period from May 11 to 17, 2022; and

(3) Persons who have not completed a COVID-19 vaccination course and will be on duty or provide services from May 25 to 31, 2022, must undergo the Specified Test once during the period from May 18 to 24, 2022.

In the compulsory testing notice issued yesterday, completion of a COVID-19 vaccination course refers to having received the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on or before May 3, 2022. For persons previously infected with COVID-19, completion of a vaccination course means having received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on or before May 3, 2022. For persons who received COVID-19 vaccines in places outside Hong Kong and have received all of the recommended dose(s) of a COVID-19 vaccine on or before May 3, 2022, they will also be regarded to have completed the vaccination course of the relevant COVID-19 vaccine, subject to the vaccine used being included on the list of vaccines recognised for specified purposes as published on

www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/list_of_recognised_covid19_vaccines.pdf.

The staff of institutions who had obtained a positive test result in a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test or rapid antigen test for COVID-19 on or after April 11, 2022, are not required to undergo testing in accordance with the requirements of the notice provided that they can produce the relevant SMS (mobile phone text message) notification containing the positive result of the test, or the relevant SMS notification or isolation order issued after making a declaration on the Government's Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test.

The staff of institutions who are required to undergo the Specified Test may choose the following means:

- (1) To undergo the Specified Test in any of the Community Testing Centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en), Temporary Testing Centres (if any) (see the list at www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_supportser/sub_ttc), or mobile specimen collection stations (if any) (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) in accordance with the instructions given by the staff at the centre/station;
- (2) To have a sample collected by a healthcare professional or trained personnel as arranged by institution operators at a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf); or
- (3) To self-arrange testing provided by a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" at their own expense (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf) and the sample through a combined nasal and throat swab must not be taken by the person himself or herself.

Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice commits an offence and may be subject to a fixed penalty of \$10,000. He or she 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 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said that the SWD and the Department of Health would issue letters to institutions to inform them of the relevant arrangements and requirements. The spokesman reminded staff of the said institutions who will undergo testing at community testing centres that they should make an advance booking via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) for the free testing service. In addition, institution operators should remind their staff members to properly keep the SMS notifications of their test results or their test result reports.

Institution operators are required to keep records of their staff having

received the Specified Test and the results within the time frames specified by the Government. They are also required to keep the list of staff members who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course. Institution operators also have to co-operate with Checking Officers (Compulsory Testing) of the SWD who are enforcing the Regulation at residential care homes.

The SWD spokesman said that starting from the 26th round of compulsory testing, staff members who have not been vaccinated and do not have medical certificates certifying that they are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination owing to health reasons have had to undergo compulsory testing at their own expense. The Government will continue to monitor the epidemic situation and make adjustments to the aforementioned testing policy after taking the overall anti-epidemic measures into account.

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

The Government announced today (May 6) 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 190 000 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:

- Kowloon City District – Oi Man Estate
- North District – Ping Kong, Ping Kong Tsuen and Ng Uk Tsuen in Sheung Shui
- Kwun Tong District – Sau Mau Ping Estate and Sau Mau Ping South Estate

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.