

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and published in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 24 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminded the public that persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notices and hence are not required to undergo compulsory testing. Completion of the vaccination course in general means having received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine 14 days ago.

A preliminary positive case involving N501Y and E484K mutant strains recorded on May 24 had been present at four specified premises. Another preliminary positive case had been present at two specified premises. Relevant persons are required to undergo compulsory testing. In relation to the previous local cases involving N501Y mutant strain, any person who had been present at two specified premises during the specified period has to undergo additional testing. In addition, since there were outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection and/or influenza-like illness in 16 schools, and the symptoms of the concerned diseases are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the 13 schools and the specified levels of three schools are also covered in the compulsory testing notice. Under existing practice, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) will provide schools subject to compulsory testing with stool specimen bottles and deep throat saliva specimen collection packs direct.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are at Annex 1.

In addition, subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with the N501Y mutant strain, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases and had been released from the quarantine centres will be subject to compulsory testing on the 3rd, 7th, 12th and 19th day counting from the announcement of the relevant confirmed case by the Department of Health (DH). Relevant persons have to undergo testing on specified dates. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

Moreover, all foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) working in Hong Kong have to undergo compulsory testing for the second time during the period from May 15 to May 30. Details are [here](#).

In accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, has to undergo testing within two days of him or her becoming aware that the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test.

Currently, there are a total of 21 community testing centres (CTCs) providing testing services for the public, including free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system was enhanced to show the booking status of the centres for the coming 21 days to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. The number of tests available for appointments at CTCs has been increased to over 46 000 per day, and additional manpower has been deployed to serve the public. As of 6pm on May 24, there are around 25 000 booking places available on May 25 at the CTCs, and around 75 per cent and 86 per cent booking places for the coming seven days and 14 days respectively. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations on May 25 for persons subject to compulsory testing for free testing:

- Playground between Lok Hing House and Wo Hing House, Hing Wah (II) Estate, Chai Wan
- G/F, Shek Wah House, Shek Lei (II) Estate, Kwai Chung
- G/F, Kam Wing House, Kam Hay Court, Ma On Shan

Coupled with the 21 CTCs, there will be a total of 47 CTCs/mobile specimen collection stations in various districts on May 25 to provide free service for persons subject to compulsory testing (including FDHs). The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in Annex 2. Persons subject to compulsory testing, and those with the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the CHP reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable).

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via

the following routes:

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any of the community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf); or
6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the community testing centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the community testing centres are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. 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 order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to the DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purposes as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

[Return2hk Scheme – Matters relating to list of medium or high risk areas in Mainland](#)

A Government spokesman said today (May 24) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has maintained close communication and liaison with the Mainland authorities on epidemic prevention and control measures of both places. Starting from May 25, the Government will adopt the list of risk level of places in the Mainland published by the National Health Commission, and upload the list of medium or high risk areas in the Mainland to the thematic website of the Return2hk Scheme (the Scheme). Hong Kong residents who have visited any area in the Mainland being classified as a medium or high risk area that is included in the list on the thematic website of the Scheme, in the past 14 days prior to and upon the day of arrival in Hong Kong, will not be exempted from compulsory quarantine under the Scheme upon their entry into Hong Kong.

Details of the Scheme are available at the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (return2hk.gov.hk or www.gov.hk).

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for the 88th day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 2 175 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 1 267 500 persons have received their first dose, with about 542 000 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 725 400 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 907 500 persons have received their second dose, with about 401 300 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 506 200 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (May 24), about 28 300 persons have received vaccination and about 15 900 new vaccination bookings have been made online, detailed as follows:

(i) About 6 000 persons received their first dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 2 700 persons vaccinated at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 3 300 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;

(ii) about 4 200 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 2 100 persons vaccinated at CVCs and about 2 100 persons at private doctors and clinics;

(iii) about 6 600 persons received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs, and about 11 500 persons received their second dose of the BioNTech vaccine;

(iv) the overall percentage of people who have received the Sinovac vaccine at CVCs is about 96 per cent; while the overall percentage of people who have received the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs is about 96 per cent; and

(v) about 5 000 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine, while about 10 900 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were seven cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, five persons were discharged,

one person was admitted for observation and one person was discharged against medical advice (please see Annex 2).

As background information, in the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were 29 cases of stroke or myocardial infarction that required admission to the Intensive Care Unit, Acute Stroke Unit and Cardiac Care Unit of public hospitals. The state of new cases admitted to the wards concerned is provided as a cross reference to enhance fuller public understanding of cases of the kind recorded on vaccine recipients.

Electrical short-circuit incident in Ruttonjee & Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for Ruttonjee & Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals made the following announcement today (May 24) regarding an incident of electrical short-circuit happened in the morning:

At around 11am today, drainage blockage in the washroom led to water seepage to the switch room in hospital main building, leading to electrical short-circuit of one bus bar in the switch room. Essential electricity supply was immediately activated. Emergency repair was conducted immediately and the incident was reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office.

During the activation of essential electricity supply system, the major medical equipment, negative pressure systems in isolation wards, emergency patient services, including accident and emergency services were not affected but 76 specialist outpatients and nine elective operations had to be rescheduled. In regard to this incident, the hospital had already expressed apologies to all the concerned patients.

Emergency repair for full resumption is in progress. To prevent recurrence of similar incidents, the Hospital will thoroughly investigate and review the incident.

CE congratulates UGC-funded

universities on outstanding performance in Research Assessment Exercise 2020

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (May 24) was pleased to note the results of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2020 announced by the University Grants Committee (UGC). She congratulated the eight UGC-funded universities, namely City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Education University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the University of Hong Kong, for their outstanding performance.

"The RAE, which last took place six years ago, shows again the strong capabilities of the universities of Hong Kong in basic research, supporting Hong Kong's development in various areas and attracting talents from overseas and the Mainland," Mrs Lam said.

About 16 000 items of research output, 340 research impact case studies and 190 research environment submissions on 13 areas were assessed in the RAE 2020. Assessments were conducted by 361 distinguished international scholars and research end users in accordance with international standards. About 70 per cent of them were non-local scholars from around the world to ensure that the assessments meet international standards.

"Among the research projects assessed, 25 per cent were judged to be world leading and a further 45 per cent were judged to be internationally excellent. The remarkable performance is testimony to the internationally recognised research quality of Hong Kong," Mrs Lam added.

To enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and to advance the development of innovation and technology, the current-term Government has been committed to supporting research work of the higher education sector, including the injection of \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund of the UGC and the setting up of a \$3 billion Research Matching Grant Scheme to provide financial resources for universities' research activities, as well as the introduction of various measures to attract, retain and nurture scientific researchers including the Global STEM Professorship Scheme set out in the 2020 Policy Address. In addition, the Government attaches great importance to the commercialisation of research and development results and is establishing the InnoHK Clusters at the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park to attract world-class scientific research institutions and technology enterprises to Hong Kong to conduct more research and development projects in collaboration with local universities and scientific research institutions. The first batch of about 20 research centres have completed the renovation of their laboratories and commenced operation progressively.

Mrs Lam said, "The UGC-funded universities are an important engine in

Hong Kong's integration with the overall development of the nation and participation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay development. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will continue to support the education and research work of the universities through the UGC, helping Hong Kong nurture talents and making contributions to Hong Kong, the nation and the whole world with their excellent research results."

Mrs Lam thanked the Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong, and each committee member for their hard work in the RAE 2020. She expressed the hope that she could meet them in the regular meeting between the Chief Executive and the UGC in January next year to listen to their views on the further development of the higher education sector of Hong Kong.