

Labour Department reminds foreign domestic helpers to undergo compulsory testing as soon as possible

â€‹The Labour Department today (May 6) reminded foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to be tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

The Government announced on April 30 that all FDHs in Hong Kong who had yet to complete a COVID-19 vaccination course are required to receive testing on a compulsory basis on or before May 9. Specimens were collected for more than 201 000 FDHs from May 1 to 4 at community testing centres (CTCs) and mobile specimen collection stations. As of May 4, more than 130 000 FDHs have reserved time slots at CTCs for receiving the test from May 5 to 9.

A spokesman for the Labour Department said, "We remind FDHs who are subject to compulsory testing to be tested as soon as possible. To avoid long wait times on the weekend, we encourage FDHs to receive testing today (May 6) and tomorrow (May 7) as far as possible. We appeal to employers to allow their FDHs to receive testing on a weekday."

For FDHs who have yet to receive their testing, they can make use of the service provided at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations in the coming few days. Details can be found in the Food and Health Bureau's press release of May 5 (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202105/05/P2021050500844.htm).

The Government thanks all FDHs and their employers for their understanding and co-operation with the anti-epidemic measures.

Ancestral land managers fined \$60,000 for failing to comply with dangerous hillside order

Three managers responsible for the management of a piece of ancestral land were convicted and fined \$60,000 in total at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts last week for failing to comply with a dangerous hillside order issued under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123).

The case involved two slopes and a retaining wall within a private lot in Yuen Long with a total length of about 90 metres and heights varying from 5m to 6m. Since the slopes and the retaining wall were liable to become

dangerous, the Buildings Department (BD) served a dangerous hillside order on the owner of the land under section 27A of the BO, requiring the owner to appoint an authorized person (AP) and a registered geotechnical engineer (RGE) to co-ordinate and supervise the remedial works proposal approved by the BD within two months from the date of the order and to complete the required works within seven months.

The owner appointed an AP and an RGE to follow up on the order. However, the remedial works were not completed within a reasonable period despite repeated reminders issued by the BD. The AP's name was later removed from the Authorized Persons' Register but the owner has not appointed another AP to follow up with the required works. The BD instigated prosecution against the three managers. They were convicted and each fined \$20,000 at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts on April 30.

"Failing to comply with a dangerous hillside order without reasonable excuse is a serious offence under the BO and may lead to serious consequences. The BD may instigate prosecution proceedings against the owner," a spokesman of the BD said today (May 6). He added that the department will continue its enforcement action against non-compliance with dangerous hillside orders to ensure public safety.

Pursuant to section 40(1B)(b) of the BO, any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with a dangerous hillside order served on him or her under section 27A of the BO commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of level 5 (\$50,000 at present) and to imprisonment for one year, as well as a further fine of \$5,000 for each day that the offence has continued.

Red flags hoisted at several beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 6) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach in Islands District; and Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tsuen Wan

The Government on May 4 exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 7.30pm of May 4, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tsuen Wan (i.e. Block R, Allway Gardens, 2 On Yat Street, Tsuen Wan) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. As at 12am yesterday (May 5), around 460 persons subject to compulsory testing had collected combined nasal and throat swab samples at the temporary specimen collection stations set up in the "restricted area" to undergo a COVID-19 virus test. The exercise finished at around 12.05am today (May 6). The test results of all persons subject to compulsory testing were negative. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the Tsuen Wan District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department mobilised around 240 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agency for their hard work to arrange for implementation of the declaration within a very short period of time. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing.

Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice on May 4, requiring persons who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from April 21 to May 4, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing on or before May 6. The Government reminds relevant persons to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by

persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will 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 or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Government facilitates catering premises to make changes to modes of operation according to needs

The Government will gazette today (May 5) the directions and specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap. 599F) to allow flexibility under the pre-requisite of fulfilling the "vaccine bubble" principle for catering premises to change their modes of operation according to the requirement in the remaining days of the current cycle of this round of social distancing measures. The relevant directions and specifications will take effect from 0.00am on May 6 till May 12 (the specified period).

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said, "The Government notices that some catering premises are unable to choose type C or type D mode of operation at the start of the cycle on April 29, 2021, as their staff members are unable to receive vaccination in time. The Government understands that some operators hope to change their modes of operation expeditiously once their staff have received vaccination. Therefore, the Government has accepted the trade's views on handling this flexibly."

According to the latest directions under the Regulation, catering businesses must display a notice showing the new mode of operation at the entrance of the catering premises before the change could take effect.

The spokesman also reminded catering premises under type C or type D mode of operation that they must register relevant information, including the mode(s) of operation, number of staff completed the COVID-19 vaccination course and number of staff not suitable to receive COVID-19 vaccination, at the FEHD's webpage. The two types of premises must also display a floor plan according to specified specifications at its entrance pursuant to the requirement, for differentiating and identifying different designated zones. The floor plan may be changed from time to time having regard to operational needs, but will take effect only after it has been displayed.

In addition, the FEHD will add a tab on "frequently asked questions and answers" on its thematic webpage on "vaccine bubble" (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19/vaccine_bubble.html) that seeks to help the trade and the public to understand the above measures and other operational details of "vaccine bubble". Furthermore, a scanning app developed by the Government is now available at Google Play Store, Apple App Store and Huawei AppGallery for operators of premises to verify the authenticity of the QR codes of their customers' vaccination or COVID-19 test records. This could be downloaded by smart phones of different operating systems for use. The name of the app is "QR Code Verification Scanner", and its icon is shown at the Annex.

The FEHD spokesman also reminded catering business operators that according to the prevailing directions under Cap. 599F, for staff of catering business undergoing a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19, the specimens collected must be through combined nasal and throat swabs. The staff concerned can continue to make use of the 21 community testing centres and mobile specimen collection stations across the territory for testing. For details, please refer to the webpage (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html).