

Tenders invited for licence of fee-paying public car park

The Government Property Agency is inviting tenders for a three-year licence of a fee-paying public car park on portions of the Ground Floor, Level Basement 1, Level Basement 2 and Level Basement 3 of Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

The premises should be used for the purpose of a fee-paying public car park for the parking of private cars and motorcycles.

The tender notice was uploaded today (April 29) to the Agency's website: www.gpa.gov.hk. Tender documents are available for collection at the Government Property Agency, 9/F, South Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, during the period from 9am to 6pm from Monday to Friday, except public holidays. The documents can also be downloaded from the Agency's website.

Interested tenderers who wish to attend a site inspection should make a prior appointment with the Government Property Agency by calling 3842 6777 on or before May 10 this year.

Tenderers must submit their tenders by placing them in the Government Logistics Department Tender Box situated on the Ground Floor, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong, before noon on May 21 this year. Late tenders will not be accepted.

Two batches of Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine with packaging defects to be returned to manufacturer in Germany

A Government spokesman announced today (April 29) that two batches of the Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine, put on hold earlier due to packaging defects, will be returned to the manufacturer, BioNTech, in Germany for disposal.

On March 24, the Government suspended the use of two batches of the vaccine (Batch Nos. 210102 and 210104) for the sake of prudence and as a precautionary measure after being notified of packaging defects including loose vial caps and leakage from the vials. The Government received the latest notification from BioNTech that the two batches concerned should be returned to the manufacturer in Germany.

BioNTech has also finished the investigation on the cause of the packaging defects and confirmed that the root cause of the incident was the imperfect crimping process at one packaging plant in Germany, and that there is no safety issue related to the defects.

The spokesman said that Fosun has arranged for the affected batches to be replaced by new batches that were packaged in another packaging plant (Baxter) in Germany. Since the resumption of the vaccination service of the BioNTech vaccine in Hong Kong, similar complaints related to crimping defects have not been received.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tung Chung

The Government today (April 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 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tung Chung (i.e. Tower 11, Carmel Cove, Caribbean Coast, 1 Kin Tung Road, Tung 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 area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 7am tomorrow (April 30).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As a preliminary positive case with an unknown source was detected in Tower 11, Carmel Cove, Caribbean Coast today and the preliminary test result involved a mutant strain, the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, so the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area after the test result was found positive."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 2am tomorrow. Persons subject to compulsory testing will be arranged to undergo nucleic acid testing 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 arrange door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

"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 7am 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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from April 27 to 29, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, according to the compulsory testing notice issued today, any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from April 16 to 29, 2021, 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 1.

If there are 2021 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) candidates in the "restricted area" who need to sit the HKDSE the following day but have not undergone testing from April 27 to 29, 2021, and are not able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, the Government advises candidates to go to the temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" as soon as possible and identify themselves as 2021 HKDSE candidates and submit relevant documents (including admission forms) for proof. The candidates will be given priority testing with a view to enabling them to obtain test results as early as possible.

The candidates concerned should go to the temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" with their identity document and admission form as soon as possible for priority testing. It is the candidate's responsibility to follow the testing process and go to the temporary specimen collection stations as soon as possible for the test. Otherwise, the officers will not be able to prioritise the testing of samples collected late.

If a candidate needs to leave the "restricted area" for the exam centre

before the declaration is revoked, he/she can make a request to the prescribed officers in the "restricted area", regardless of whether the test result has been obtained or not. The prescribed officer may allow the candidate to leave the "restricted area" after verifying that the candidate has undergone testing as required and recording the relevant information of the candidate. Candidates who receive a negative test result on their way to the exam centres will be allowed to sit the exam as scheduled. For the safety of all candidates, only those candidates who have obtained negative results in the nucleic acid test will be allowed to enter the examination hall. For details, please read the relevant press release issued by the Education Bureau earlier: www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202104/01/P2021040100808.htm.

The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which will start operation at 7pm 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 \$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 compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

FEHD raids fresh provision shop suspected of selling chilled meat as fresh meat

In a blitz operation today (April 29), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) raided a fresh provision shop (FPS) at Canton Road, Mong Kok, suspected of selling chilled meat as fresh meat.

During the operation, FEHD officers marked and sealed about 407 kilograms of suspected chilled pork in the shop for further investigation. The licensee of the FPS is assisting the FEHD's investigations for suspected violation of the Food Business Regulation. Prosecution will be taken out if sufficient evidence is collected. During the operation, FEHD officers also initiated prosecution against the shop as storage and preparation of pork in an open space by its staff were found, and a verbal warning was issued to the

FPS operator for non-compliance of a relevant licensing condition.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Anyone selling chilled meat without permission commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment on conviction. The department will continue to closely monitor the sale of fresh meat at the retail level and take stringent enforcement action to safeguard food safety and public health. Moreover, the department will consider cancellation of the relevant FPS's licence if any licensed FPS is found selling chilled meat as fresh meat."

FEHD launches thematic webpage to help the trade and general public understand how the "vaccine bubble" works

To help catering premises and scheduled premises operators, as well as the general public, understanding the operational details of the "vaccine bubble", the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has launched a thematic webpage (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19/vaccine_bubble_FP.html) as a one-stop portal to provide relevant information and working tools, a spokesman for the FEHD said today (April 29).

The thematic webpage sets out in detail the various operation modes for catering premises, bars or pubs/nightclubs and scheduled premises, and provides a link to the scanner app for catering premises and scheduled premises operators to download, so that they can verify the authenticity of their customers' vaccination or COVID-19 test record QR codes. Information such as notices of operation mode for the catering business, posters for customers, formats of catering premises' floor plans, the templates for relevant forms, etc, have also been uploaded. Catering premises operators under Types C and D Modes of Operation may also declare via the webpage that their staff comply with the vaccination requirements.

"The FEHD will also issue advisory letters to the trade informing them of the latest directions and specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), and calling on them to continue to strictly comply with various anti-epidemic regulations. After the new regulation comes into effect, the department will focus initially on publicity and education as well as providing advice, and will closely monitor the implementation of the 'vaccine bubble'," the spokesman said.

Also, according to the latest directions under Cap. 599F, for catering

business operators arranging their staff to undergo a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19, combined nasal and throat swabs must be used for specimens collected on or after today. The online registration for the current free deep throat saliva testing service for frontline staff of catering businesses provided by the FEHD will cease at 5pm tomorrow (April 30) as scheduled. Frontline staff of catering businesses can continue to make use of the specimen collection services by combined nasal and throat swabs at 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).

In addition, apart from the regular testing services provided for practitioners working at Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse, the free COVID-19 testing services will continue to be arranged by the FEHD for targeted groups (including high-exposure groups such as staff and personnel working in markets, licensed hawkers and practitioners of cold stores), and the deadline for online registration for the scheme has been extended to May 31. People in high-exposure groups who have already registered and undergone testing may register again. The testing agency (Prenetics Limited) will be responsible for the provision of one-stop services covering specimen taking and testing. For details of the testing programme, please call the hotline of the testing agency at 3008 8319 or visit the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19_test/info_20200926.html).

Furthermore, the FEHD is launching another one-stop thematic webpage to put together all relevant information relating to air change in restaurants, including the video record of the webinar held earlier, for the trade's ease of reference. The directions in relation to the catering business that take effect today set out that after submitting an application for extension of time, a catering business operator must complete the registration within the deadline specified in the FEHD's reply. In the meantime, the premises which has submitted such an application will not be regarded as not adopting the air change requirement, and hence the corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission will not affect it. The FEHD will handle separately those cases where an application for extension of time has not been made, or that the application has been rejected, or that no follow up action has been taken within the extended time limit specified by the FEHD for completing the registration, etc.