

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 six specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

Since there were outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) in six schools today (April 27), and the symptoms of URTI are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, these six schools are covered in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are at Annex 1.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminded the public that 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.

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. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge. Persons with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at community testing centres 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 Department of Health (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 Centre for Health Protection (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 notification 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."

[Licensed travel agents can resume organising local group tours with conditions](#)

The Government announced today (April 27) that the Executive Council has approved that, subject to the condition of licensed travel agents pledging strict compliance with the Anti-epidemic Undertakings for Local Tours, the holding of local group tours of not more than 30 persons (inclusive of frontline working staff) can be resumed with conditions pursuant to the group gathering restrictions as stipulated in the prevailing Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) starting this Thursday (April 29).

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "The tourism industry is the hardest-hit sector under the epidemic. With the stabilisation of the epidemic and the active co-operation of the trade, the Government has been making every effort to help it explore business opportunities. Allowing the resumption of organisation of local group tours with conditions, coupled with the extension of the Green Lifestyle Local Tour Incentive Scheme (GLIS) announced earlier and the upcoming launch of the Second Round of the 'Free Tour' programme by the Hong

Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), will enable the gradual resumption of business and provide reliefs to the tourism trade and practitioners of related sectors (e.g. tourist guides and tour escorts, the transport trade and even the catering sector) while safeguarding public health and infection control. The public will rest assured when joining the tourism activities."

The tourism trade agrees to adopt more stringent anti-epidemic measures in order to resume the organisation of local group tours. The Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) will revise the Undertakings set earlier to include more stringent public health and anti-epidemic measures as follows:

1. Vaccination of working staff: Requiring travel agents to ensure that all working staff accompanying and receiving the local group tours have received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine prior to receiving any local group tours, except for those who due to health reasons have declared such a condition to the travel agents with the production of a medical certificate, and provide proof of the negative result of a nucleic acid test (the relevant specimen must be a combined nasal and throat swab) within seven days prior to receiving the group tours. The relevant records must be retained to facilitate inspection and follow-up by the relevant persons when necessary.
2. Enhanced contact tracing: Requiring local group tour participants to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code whenever they board a means of transport and enter a venue (including attractions and restaurants) that displays such a QR code, so as to facilitate more efficient contact tracing by the authorities when necessary.

Apart from the above new requirements, other major requirements in the Undertakings will remain unchanged, including prior registration with the TIC by the travel agents and their signing of the Undertakings for strict compliance with the anti-epidemic measures listed therein, which cover the arrangements for tour participants, itineraries, transportation, meals, attractions and working staff of the travel agents to safeguard public health. Itineraries must cover the designated green spots of the GLIS, or any of the tour itineraries under the "Free Tour" programme of the HKTB.

The TIC will continue to be responsible for execution of the above arrangement, including monitoring and conducting spot checks on the travel agents' compliance with the Undertakings regarding the registered group tours. If a travel agent violates the Undertakings, the local group tours concerned will no longer be eligible for incentives under the GLIS or the HKTB's "Free Tour" programme. The travel agent will also be suspended from registration with the TIC for local group tours for a month.

Government and Working Group strive together with stakeholders to assist dine-in catering premises in improving air change or installing air purifiers

The Secretary for Food and Health has earlier stipulated a requirement on air change or air purifiers to be complied with in dine-in catering premises in the directions in relation to the catering business under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation). The Working Group, established for the smooth implementation of the requirement, together with relevant government departments continued to proactively co-operate with stakeholders including catering business operators and ventilation works contractors, and are committed to assisting them to smoothly implement the requirement, so as to protect the health of staff, customers and the public and to fortify the public's confidence in patronising catering premises.

Further to a meeting with the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong on April 23, the Working Group together with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department held a webinar today (April 27) attended by stakeholders from the catering sector through the invitation of the Efficiency Office in support of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee. Attendees exchanged views on matters of mutual concern candidly and would strive together to comply with relevant requirements. The Working Group has also uploaded to the FEHD's webpage (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/question_air-changes_purification.html) a set of frequently-asked questions and answers to address issues of concerns raised by the trade and specialist contractors, and will later on upload video of the webinar following editing to the FEHD's webpage.

A Government spokesman reminded catering business operators that in order to comply with the requirements on air change or air purifiers in catering premises under the Regulation, they are required to register with the FEHD on or before April 30 that the air change per hour at seating areas of their premises has reached at least six, or air purifiers that meet the specified specifications have been installed according to the on-the-ground situation, together with a certificate issued by a registered specialist contractor (ventilation works category). As at April 26, 2 995 catering premises have submitted online registrations and another 129 have submitted online declarations before March 18 through the voluntary declaration scheme. The FEHD is also constructing a thematic page to facilitate different stakeholders including catering business operators and ventilation works contractors in browsing and searching relevant materials with a view to assisting them in completing the registration.

"Catering premises must submit an application of extension to the FEHD if they are unable to complete the registration on time. The application form can be downloaded from the FEHD's webpage (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/Application_for_extension_of_time_for_registration_on_air_change_installation_of_air_purifier_in_catering_premises.html) or by scanning the QR code in the attachment. After submitting the application, catering business operators must complete the registration within the deadline specified in the FEHD's reply. In the meantime, premises which have submitted such an application may observe the time limit applicable to the daily dine-in service and be subject to the cap on the number of persons that may be seated at one table etc. in accordance with the applicable directions prevailing at the time. The FEHD will handle separately cases which did not apply for extension or where their applications have been rejected or failed to follow up completing the registration within the extended time limit specified by the FEHD. During the initial stage of the implementation of the new requirement, the department will focus on publicity and education as well as providing advice, and will closely monitor the relevant situation and adjust the arrangements in due course," the spokesman said.

The spokesman strongly appealed to catering business operators to fight the virus together, and strictly comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a persistent manner to protect personal and public health.

Statement of LCSD

With regards to the act of misconduct and use of liquid soap at the music fountains and interactive wet play areas of the Kwun Tong Promenade, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) made the following statement today (April 27):

The LCSD has closed the music fountains and interactive wet play areas for thorough cleaning, and is considering taking legal action to hold the person(s) involved responsible.

Members of the public are reminded that with accordance to Pleasure Grounds Regulation (Cap 132BC), no person while in any pleasure ground shall behave otherwise than in an orderly and decent manner or be otherwise than properly clothed. A person shall not, in any pleasure ground obstruct, disturb or annoy any other person in the proper use of the playground. No person shall bathe, wade or wash in any ornamental lake, pond, stream or water. Offenders are liable to prosecution and subject to a maximum fine of \$2,000 and imprisonment for 14 days.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for the 61st day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 1 327 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 872 500 persons have received their first dose, with about 414 100 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 458 400 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 454 500 persons have received their second dose, with about 294 900 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 159 700 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (April 27), about 24 600 persons have received vaccination and about 16 200 new vaccination bookings have been made online, detailed as follows:

(i) About 4 300 persons received their first dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 2 200 persons vaccinated at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 2 100 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;

(ii) about 5 300 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 3 300 persons vaccinated at CVCs and about 2 000 persons at private doctors and clinics;

(iii) about 8 100 persons received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs, and about 6 900 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 97 per cent; and

(v) about 3 800 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine, while about 12 400 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 10 cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, six persons were discharged, three persons were 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 49 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.