

Red flags hoisted at some 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 (April 18) 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; Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Yellow fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (April 18) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice and specifications under Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation

The Government exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and gazetted a compulsory testing notice and specifications, which require any person who had been present at 13 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test, and continue to empower a registered medical practitioner to

require any person whom he clinically suspects has contracted COVID-19 to undergo a test during a period of 14 days from April 17 to April 30, 2021.

Compulsory testing notice

Currently, in all districts in Hong Kong, if one or more new confirmed cases are found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses), or there are sewage samples tested positive, or there are other factors which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice. For testing targeting at workplaces, if one or more confirmed cases are found in a workplace, it will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

In view of the confirmed cases announced and preliminary positive case recorded today (April 17), five premises fulfilling the above criteria and a fitness centre attended by a preliminary positive case are included in the compulsory testing notice. In addition, targeting a local case with unknown sources involving N501Y mutant strain, seven places where the confirmed case had been to are also included in the compulsory testing notice.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "Some specified places related to the confirmed cases announced today have been covered in the compulsory testing notice yesterday. Under the new direction in fighting the pandemic, we would continue to include in the compulsory testing notice places related to preliminary positive cases as early as practicable, in order to break the transmission chain in the community early in a targeted manner, with a view to staying ahead of the epidemic. In addition, as one of the local cases with unknown sources announced today involved N501Y mutant strain, we have to conduct more extensive compulsory testing targeting at the activities carried out and the places that had been patronised by the confirmed case. We appeal for the co-operation of members of the public to stop the spread of the virus in the community together."

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

1. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part A of Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from April 4 to April 17, 2021 (including but not limited to residents, visitors and workers), has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 15 and April 17, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.
2. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part B of Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from April 4 to April 17, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 15 and April 17, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

3. Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Part C of Annex 1 at any time during the period from April 4 to April 17, 2021, has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 15 and April 17, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

4. Any person who had been present at Hung Lok Seafood Restaurant, G/F, 13B Pak She Praya Road, Cheung Chau at any time on April 14, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021.

5. Any person who had been present at HSBC, Basement, G/F, 1/F, 2/F & 4/F, HSBC Building Tsim Sha Tsui, 82-84 Nathan Road and Standard Chartered Bank, Basement, Shop B1 on G/F & M/F, Golden Crown Court, 66-70 Nathan Road, Yau Tsim Mong at any time on April 9, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021.

6. Any person who had been present at Central Pier No. 5 and Cheung Chau Ferry Pier at any time on April 14, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff, passengers and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021.

7. Any lodger who had checked out from Ramada Hong Kong Grand, 23 Austin Avenue, Yau Tsim Mong at any time during the period from April 9 to April 17 2021, has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021.

8. Any person who had taken any of the ferries running on the route between Central and Cheung Chau operated by Sun Ferry Services Company Limited on April 14, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff, passengers and visitors), has to undergo testing by April 19, 2021.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminds 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/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 Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations tomorrow (April 18). Please see Annex 2 for details of the service scope:

- outside Central Pier No.5

- King Tai House of King Lai Court, Ngau Chi Wan
- Badminton Court next to Yan Ching House of Kai Ching Estate, Kowloon City
- Block 1, Scenery Court, Sha Tin
- Cheung Chau Sports Centre

The service period of the mobile specimen collection station at 15-17 Mody Road, Tsim Sha Tsui will be extended to April 19 (Monday), and open to all local residents and workers subject to compulsory testing. The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at George V Memorial Park, Kowloon, MacPherson Playground in Mong Kok, Arthur Street Temporary Playground in Yau Ma Tei, Beech Street in Tai Kok Tsui, 100 Granville Road in Tsim Sha Tsui East and Hankow Road in Tsim Sha Tsui will be extended to April 25 (Sunday).

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 across the territory 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 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 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/.

Relevant specifications for compulsory testing for persons clinically suspected to have contracted COVID-19

According to expert advice, compulsory testing for symptomatic patients can effectively slow down the transmission of the virus by early identification, early isolation and early treatment. To keep the epidemic situation under control, the Government considers it necessary to continue to solicit help from medical practitioners in identifying possibly infected persons as soon as possible.

During the period of 14 days from April 17 to April 30, 2021, registered medical practitioners may, by a written direction, require a person whom the medical practitioner attends to in the course of professional practice and clinically suspects to have contracted COVID-19 to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test. Persons who receive the written direction (persons who are subject to testing under written directions) should undergo a test within two days after the issue date of the written direction (the testing deadline).

Persons who are subject to testing under written directions may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(1) To use the specimen bottle provided by the registered medical practitioner who issued the written direction to collect a deep throat saliva specimen and submit the specimen bottle to designated specimen collection points by the testing deadline (see the specimen collection points and time at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html). Having reported the case to the DH, the registered medical practitioner who issued the written direction will be notified of the test result; or

(2) To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories recognised by the DH (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf) by the testing deadline and submit the test result to the medical practitioner who issued the written direction or his clinic staff by electronic mail, fax, or by hardcopy within four days after the testing deadline.

For example, if the written direction is issued on Monday, the person subject to testing under the written direction should undergo a test via one of the above options on or before Wednesday, the testing deadline. If the test result of the specimen is preliminary positive, the specimen will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the DH for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

"Persons who are subject to testing under written directions are suspected to be infected and should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres for testing. To reduce transmission risk, relevant persons who underwent testing are advised to stay at home and avoid going out when waiting for test results."

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 DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purpose 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."

CHP's response to media enquiries

In response to media enquiries on a confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) who has received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination, a spokesperson for the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health responded today (April 17) as follows:

The 63-year-old male patient (Case 11645) received Sinovac vaccines in the Community Vaccination Centre at Yau Oi Sports Centre in Tuen Mun on March 10 and April 7. The specimen of the patient collected on April 14, i.e. seven days later, was tested positive for COVID-19. Relevant epidemiological investigations by the CHP are on-going.

Based on the information of the drug company, it takes time after Sinovac vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and offer protection against COVID-19. Individuals may not be protected effectively until 14 days after their second dose of vaccine.

The spokesperson for the CHP emphasised that there is a need for members of the public to continue non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) after vaccination, including social distancing, good hand hygiene and wearing a mask in public, to reduce the risk of virus transmission. At this time, the combination of continuing NPIs and adding vaccination will provide the most protection against the virus.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for the 51st day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 1 057 200 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 697 300 persons have received their first dose, with about 372 000 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 325 300 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 359 900 persons have received their second dose, with about 212 700 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 147 200 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (April 17), about 39 400 persons have received vaccination and about 20 200 new vaccination bookings have been made online, detailed as follows:

(i) About 4 000 persons received their first dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 2 600 persons vaccinated at eight Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 1 400 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;

(ii) about 12 100 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 9 700 persons vaccinated at the CVCs and about 2 400 persons at private doctors and clinics;

(iii) about 21 400 persons received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine at 21 CVCs, and about 1 900 persons received their second dose of the BioNTech vaccine;

(iv) the overall percentage of people who have received the Sinovac vaccine at the eight CVCs is about 97 per cent; while the overall percentage of people who have received the BioNTech vaccine at the 21 CVCs is about 95 per cent; and

(v) about 3 700 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine, while about 16 500 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 14 cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, 10 persons were discharged, one person was admitted for observation and three persons were discharged against medical advice (please see Annex 2).

As background information, in the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were 44 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.