

Implementation of inspection arrangements for Companies Register

In regard to certain news reports on the implementation of the inspection arrangements for the Companies Register, a spokesman for the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau today (March 31) responded as follows:

Upon the implementation of the new inspection regime, all searchers (including the media) will continue to be able to access the information of directors on the Companies Register, including their personal correspondence addresses (in place of the current residential addresses) and partial identification numbers (IDN) (the alphabet(s) and three digits in the case of Hong Kong identity card). The availability of other information currently available for inspection on the register will not be in any way hindered. Such information, together with the name of a director, should be sufficient to enable searchers to ascertain the identity of the director concerned.

The new inspection arrangements are comparable to those adopted in other overseas common law jurisdictions. When we consulted the public on the relevant new arrangements in 2009, we have made reference to the practices of the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, where no personal identification numbers are required to be filed on their respective public registers. On residential address of directors, the UK company law gives every director the option to provide a service address for the public record, with his/her residential address kept on a separate record to which access is restricted to specified public authorities. There are also jurisdictions allowing directors to file "alternate addresses" in place of their residential addresses.

The Companies Ordinance (CO) stipulates that post office box numbers are not allowed to be used as the correspondence addresses by company directors. The correspondence addresses filed by company directors must be specific addresses that can be used for service of documents. In case there is a situation where service of documents to a director by way of the correspondence address is not possible, the CO also provides that the Court has the authority to make an order instructing the Companies Registry to disclose the residential addresses of the directors concerned for communication purpose. The Registrar of Companies may also make available the residential address of a director for public inspection if the correspondence address is no longer valid. Therefore, the new inspection regime will not impede the necessary service of documents. On conducting customer due diligence, searchers will have access to the correspondence address and partial IDN of a director, and they may also apply to the Companies Registry for inspecting the residential address and full IDN after obtaining authorisation from that director.

Specified persons to be defined by the relevant subsidiary legislation

can apply to the Registrar of Companies for access to full personal information on the register. The specified persons include shareholders of a company and public officers or public bodies (including law enforcement agencies), trustees in bankruptcy, liquidators, and inspectors under the Trustee Ordinance, the CO and the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance, etc.

The new inspection regime is indeed stipulated in the yet-to-commenced provisions in the CO which have undergone extensive consultation in 2009. At the time, the majority of respondents to the consultation supported masking of the residential addresses and full IDN of directors and company secretaries due to privacy and risks of misuse of information. Many also supported following the arrangements adopted in other jurisdictions, for example allowing access to residential addresses only by certain institutions such as public authorities, upon application. In fact, unregulated disclosure of personal information such as personal full IDN and residential addresses may potentially increase crime risk, such as fraud. The new inspection regime was passed by the Legislative Council in July 2012. However, since some stakeholders held diverse views over how the arrangements should be brought into operation, the Government decided to first implement the provisions for company secretaries to provide correspondence addresses instead of residential addresses under the new inspection regime in 2014, while deferring commencement of the remaining provisions of the new inspection regime in order not to delay the implementation of other major parts of the CO.

In recent years, there has been rising community concern over whether personal information contained in public registers are adequately protected, especially in the light of increased reported cases of doxxing and personal data misuse. In its report issued in 2015, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data suggested, amongst other things, the Government to implement the previous proposal to limit the disclosure of identification numbers and residential addresses of company directors filed with the Companies Registry.

Implementation of the new inspection regime would involve substantial modifications of the Companies Registry's information system. We therefore propose bringing the provisions into operation by phases to enhance personal data protection. We respect that the community will take time to understand how the new inspection regime will work in practice. We therefore will consult the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Financial Affairs next Friday (April 9) on the entire plan to implement the regime by phases to enable LegCo members and the public to better understand the proposed arrangements.

We would like to reiterate that the new inspection regime has struck a reasonable balance between continuing to allow public access to the necessary personal information to ascertain the identity of directors and other major officers of companies, and protecting personal privacy.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for the 34th day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 505 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 461 000 persons have received their first dose, with about 309 700 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 151 300 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 44 000 persons have received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (March 31), the following vaccination and booking figures were recorded:

- (i) About 5 100 persons received their first dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 3 300 persons vaccinated at eight Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 1 800 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;
- (ii) about 9 600 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 3 900 persons vaccinated at the CVCs and about 5 700 persons at private doctors and clinics;
- (iii) the overall percentage of people who have received the Sinovac vaccine at the eight CVCs is about 94 per cent; and
- (iv) about 2 900 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were three cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, one person was discharged, one person was admitted for observation and one person was discharged against medical advice (please see Annex 2).

For those COVID-19 vaccine recipients who had experienced serious adverse event following immunisation and were admitted to hospital for treatment after receiving the first vaccine dose, their booking for the second vaccine dose made with CVCs or Hospital Authority's General Out-patient Clinics will be cancelled on prudent consideration and for their health benefit. These vaccine recipients are advised to first consult their attending doctor or family doctor on their suitability for receiving the second dose vaccination, before making online booking for the same.

As background information, in the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were 51 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.

[Construction site personnel can make appointments for free COVID-19 testing service](#)

The Food and Health Bureau announced today (March 31) that the Government will continue to provide one-off free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to all construction site personnel in Hong Kong within April. Eligible persons may make booking for testing service online starting today.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The Government provided one-off free voluntary COVID-19 testing service to registered construction workers at community testing centres through online booking in March. The response had been positive. Although the local epidemic situation is gradually abating, the global epidemic situation has continued to remain severe. We need to continue to suppress the epidemic and avoid any rebound. Having considered the effectiveness of regular testing in suppressing the overall epidemic situation and individual cluster outbreaks, we considered it necessary to extend the relevant testing arrangements.

"The Government will regularly review the coverage of relevant targeted groups based on the latest epidemic risk assessment."

"The free testing service for construction site personnel will be available until end April. Apart from registered construction workers, the free testing service will also be open to other resident site personnel. We encourage eligible persons to actively participate in the free voluntary testing to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers. The construction workers who underwent testing in March can make booking again. Eligible persons can choose a suitable time slot for testing taking into account their own needs. If the eligible persons have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo free testing provided by the Government as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the community testing centres."

Eligible persons should make advance booking for the free testing service via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). Those who did not make an appointment have to pay for the testing service at \$240.

The community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when the

testing centres close in the afternoon and at night. When arriving at the community testing centre at the designated time slot, registered construction workers and other resident site personnel should present identity document used at the time of booking (such as Hong Kong identity card or passport), the SMS booking confirmation as well as their construction worker registration card issued by the Construction Industry Council or a letter issued by their main contractor as identity proof for the resident site personnel of their respective site for verification.

From April 1 till April 30, each eligible person can receive free testing service once only. Participants will be notified by SMS through their mobile phones if the test result is negative. Should any specimen be tested preliminary positive, it will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

Currently, the number of tests available for appointments at community testing centres has been greatly increased to over 38 000 per day. As of today, the appointment rate of the 21 community testing centres in the territory for the next seven days is only about 20 per cent, with plenty of places available to meet the testing demand. Construction site personnel may attend community testing centres in various districts for free testing.

In addition to attending the community testing centres for testing, citizens can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including obtaining a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, MTR stations or designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points. For details on testing means other than community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html.

Furthermore, to encourage more members of the public to receive vaccination as early as possible, the Government is exploring that relevant personnel who have completed vaccination (i.e. 14 days after receiving the second vaccine dose) would be deemed as having fulfilled the regular testing requirement. The Development Bureau is discussing with the construction industry with a view to encouraging industry practitioners to receive vaccination as early as possible as an arrangement in place of regular testing, and details will be announced at a suitable juncture when confirmed.

[Government to gazette compulsory](#)

testing notice

The Government will exercise the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publish 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.

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.

Six premises fulfilling the above criteria are included in the compulsory testing notice today (March 31). Among them, since a confirmed case had worked in five buildings, residents, visitors and workers of these buildings are required to undergo compulsory testing as they would possibly be subject to higher infectious risks.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from March 18 to March 31, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by April 2, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between March 29 and March 31, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

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, have to undergo testing within two days of he/she becoming aware of 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.

Starting from tomorrow (April 1), the mobile specimen collection station at Plaza of Sha Tin Town Hall (near New Town Plaza) will be relocated to Main Plaza, Sha Tin Park, 2 Yuen Wo Road (near Amphitheatre), and will be open until April 7 (Wednesday) tentatively. The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Hankow Road in Tsim Sha Tsui and Edinburgh

Place in Central will be extended to April 7 (Wednesday) and April 11 (Sunday) respectively.

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 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 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 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 follows up on COVID-19 confirmed](#)

cases at Block B, Phase III, Kwan Yick Building in Sai Ying Pun

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (March 31) said that as four confirmed cases of COVID-19 recently occurred at Block B, Phase III, Kwan Yick Building in Sai Ying Pun, involving units 10 on two different floors, the CHP is proactively following up to investigate whether the infections of the cases are related, so as to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus.

The CHP has co-ordinated with related Government departments and conducted a site inspection tonight to the concerned floors and units of Block B, Phase III, Kwan Yick Building to investigate and examine if environmental factors were involved in the infection of the cases. The CHP took into account the opinions from experts and decided to carry out prudent measures on infection control. Except two units with confirmed cases, the DH will issue quarantine orders to all asymptomatic residents of units 10 on all floors of Block B, Phase III, Kwan Yick Building (2nd Floor to 23rd Floor) and transfer them to quarantine centres; symptomatic residents will be sent to the hospital for treatment.

The Government will exercise power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and issue a compulsory testing notice to Block B, Phase III, Kwan Yick Building. The CHP reminds relevant persons to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice.

The CHP spokesman urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk, to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.