

# 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 eight 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 which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

Seven premises fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notice today (March 23). In addition, since there was outbreak of influenza-like illness (ILI) in TWGHs Shiu Wong Lee Moon Fook Nursery School, Shop 1 & 2, UG/F, Comfort Centre, 18 Yue Fai Road, Aberdeen, and the symptoms of ILI are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the school was also covered in the compulsory testing notice.

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 March 10 to March 23, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by March 25, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between March 21 and March 23, 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 March 10 to March 23, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff, students and visitors), have to undergo testing by March 25, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing choose to undergo testing using the specimen bottles distributed by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), they have to return the specimen bottle with the sample by March 27, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between March 21 and March 23, 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.

The Government will set up a mobile specimen collection station at Bauhinia Garden in Tseung Kwan O tomorrow (March 24) for residents and workers subject to compulsory testing. The service period of the mobile specimen collection station at the carpark of Quarry Bay Community Hall will be extended to March 25 (Thursday). 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 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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://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 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/](http://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."

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## [Hong Kong Customs smashes suspected cannabis growing den \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (March 23) smashed a suspected cannabis growing den in Sai Kung. A batch of suspected cannabis plants, about 200 grams of suspected cannabis buds and a small amount of chocolates suspected to contain controlled cannabinoids, with an estimated market value of about \$1 million, were seized. One woman was arrested.

Customs officers yesterday (March 22) inspected an air parcel at Hong Kong International Airport that had arrived in Hong Kong from Canada and found about 70g of suspected cannabis buds. After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers this afternoon raided a residential premises in Sai Kung where 13 suspected cannabis plants and some suspected cannabis growing equipment were found, including solar lamps, ventilation facilities and electronic thermo-hygrometers. About 200g of suspected cannabis buds and a small amount of chocolates suspected to contain controlled cannabinoids were also seized.

A 54-year-old woman suspected to be connected to the case was arrested.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, both cultivation of cannabis and trafficking in a dangerous drug are serious offences. The maximum penalty for cultivation of cannabis is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for 15 years, and that for trafficking in a dangerous drug is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



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## Man sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

A 53-year-old man was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for 10 days by the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (March 23) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (the Regulation).

The man was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he left the place of quarantine on July 6, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with contravening sections 8(1) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 10 days.

Pursuant to the Regulation, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), starting from December 25, 2020, all persons arriving in Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival in Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that breaching a compulsory quarantine order is a criminal offence that the Government will not tolerate, and solemnly reminded the public to comply with the Regulation. As of today, a total of 117 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to 14 weeks or a fine of up to \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.

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## Director of Hong Kong Observatory highlights Observatory's latest developments (with photos)

The Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), Dr Cheng Cho-ming, hosted a press briefing today (March 23) to recap the weather in 2020 and elaborate on the weather outlook for Hong Kong this year as well as the HKO's latest developments.

Dr Cheng pointed out that 2020 was one of the three warmest years on record globally, according to the preliminary assessment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Various extreme weather events continued to affect different parts of the world. The decade from 2011 to 2020 was also the warmest on record.

Locally, the annual mean temperature in 2020 was 24.4 degrees, the second warmest on record in Hong Kong since 1884, with eleven months being warmer than usual. The summer from June to August last year was the hottest on record, with the mean temperature, mean maximum temperature and mean minimum temperature reaching 29.6 degrees, 32.6 degrees and 27.7 degrees respectively, all the highest on record. Additionally, there were 50 Hot Nights (with a daily minimum temperature at 28.0 degrees or above) and 47 Very Hot Days (with a daily maximum temperature at 33.0 degrees or above) in 2020, both hitting record highs. As a result of the cold surges affecting Hong Kong, it was relatively cold in January this year, while it was much warmer and sunnier than usual in February due to the generally weaker northeast monsoon over southern China most of the time.

On the weather outlook for 2021, the HKO predicted that the tropical cyclone season may start in June or earlier in Hong Kong. It is expected that there will be five to eight tropical cyclones coming within 500 kilometres of Hong Kong during the year, which is normal to above normal. Under the effect of global warming, the annual mean temperature this year is expected to be above normal, with a high chance of reaching the warmest top 10 on record. The annual rainfall is expected to be normal to below normal in 2021. However, Hong Kong may still be affected by heavy rain and members of the public should make proper preparations for the rain and typhoon seasons.

Dr Cheng also highlighted the latest developments in the HKO's work. In February this year, the HKO collated meteorological data collected at the HKO Headquarters and other key meteorological stations, and updated the 30-year climatological normals for Hong Kong from 1981-2010 to 1991-2020, in accordance with the relevant WMO guidelines. The HKO compared the two sets of climatological normals and observed statistically significant increases in the annual mean temperature, annual mean maximum temperature and annual mean minimum temperature in Hong Kong, suggesting that Hong Kong was getting warmer due to global warming and local urbanisation. Dr Cheng emphasised that climate change trends warrant the public's continuous attention.

As announced in "The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address", the HKO will, starting from the second quarter of 2021, provide basic weather information on its website in eight ethnic minority languages. A new "Personalised Website" will be launched to provide weather information in eight ethnic minority languages including Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Nepali, Urdu, Tagalog, Thai, Punjabi and Vietnamese, and users may customise their display languages.

With the rain season approaching, the HKO plans to launch the "Localised Heavy Rain Advisory" service in the second quarter of 2021 to replace the existing "Announcement on Localised Heavy Rain" service which provides actual rainfall recorded in different locations. Under the new service, the HKO will issue advisories with reference to recorded rainfall and rainfall forecasts from its nowcasting system to advise members of the public of localised heavy rain as early as possible and assist with their early preparation.

The HKO will also incorporate a "Probability of Significant Rain" forecast into its nine-day weather forecast beginning from this afternoon to provide the predicted probability of cumulative rainfall reaching 10 millimetres or above generally over Hong Kong. The public may plan their activities ahead with reference to the forecast and make better preparations.

In addition, the HKO will roll out a trial feature called "My Weather Observation" on the mobile application "MyObservatory" to enable the public to report special weather phenomena such as rainbows and hail. Users may also join the Community Weather Observing Scheme (CWOS) through "MyObservatory". CWOS members can upload weather photos or video clips onto the CWOS Facebook public group using the "My Weather Observation" feature. The Scheme aims to use such crowdsourced meteorological information to enhance the public's awareness and knowledge of different weather conditions.

On public education, the HKO will launch an interactive e-book titled "A Tour of Tropical Cyclones" for children to enhance their understanding of tropical cyclones and awareness of disaster prevention. The e-book will cover topics such as classification and naming of tropical cyclones, their structures and tracks, their impacts on Hong Kong as well as the related precautionary measures.

In respect of upper-air meteorological measurements, the HKO has been using weather balloons to measure wind direction, wind speed, air temperature, humidity and air pressure in the upper atmosphere on a daily basis, and began to measure water vapour content every month since late last year. The year 2021 also marks the 100th anniversary of upper-air meteorological measurements by the HKO. The HKO will set up a thematic webpage to introduce the related history.

Dr Cheng announced in the briefing that the HKO Open Day held annually in March would be held online this year in view of the latest development of the COVID-19 epidemic. Although in-person visits to the HKO Headquarters are not possible, the public may visit various parts of the HKO Headquarters through virtual tours and videos on the new "Hong Kong Observatory Open Day 2021" webpage to be launched on March 26. The HKO will also host a live-

streaming event on the webpage and its Facebook page on March 27 afternoon, which will feature a sand-painting performance to bring out messages on climate change and extreme weather. Results of the online polling campaign "2016-2020 Top 10 Mind-boggling Weather and Climate Events Selection", which attracted over 5 000 voters, will also be announced.

Dr Cheng's speech at the press briefing is available on the HKO's website at: [www.weather.gov.hk/en/dhko/voice/files/speech20210323e.pdf](http://www.weather.gov.hk/en/dhko/voice/files/speech20210323e.pdf)



## [CHP investigates suspected puffer fish poisoning cases](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (March 23) investigating two suspected puffer fish poisoning cases, and hence reminded members of the public not to consume puffer fish.

The cases involve two females aged 18 and 45 who developed tongue and lip numbness, dizziness, and limb weakness and numbness from immediately after to about 11 hours after consuming cooked puffer fish eggs, caught in local waters by a friend, at home together on March 21.

Both attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Tuen Mun Hospital today and were admitted for treatment. They are now in stable condition.

Investigations by the CHP are continuing.

A spokesman for the CHP said that consumption of puffer fish is the main cause of food poisoning from tetrodotoxin. Tetrodotoxin is a potent water-soluble neurotoxin that can affect the central nervous system.

"Organs such as the liver, gonads and skin of puffer fish have high concentrations of tetrodotoxin. Being heat-stable, the toxin does not decompose upon cooking, boiling, drying or freezing. Tetrodotoxin intoxication can cause problems in respiration and circulation and is

potentially fatal. There is no known antidote or antitoxin that can decompose tetrodotoxin. Members of the public are advised to avoid purchasing and preparing puffer fish or unknown fish for consumption to prevent tetrodotoxin-related food poisoning," the spokesman said.