

Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Causeway Bay and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice (with photo)

The Government yesterday (March 17) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 8pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Causeway Bay (i.e. Hoi Kung Court, 264-268 Gloucester Road, and Hoi To Court, 271-275 Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday, requiring persons who had been present at the above buildings for more than two hours from March 4 to 17, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 19. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 8am today (March 18) and carried out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing in accordance with the requirements of the relevant declaration and compulsory testing notice. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at around 11am today.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the Wan Chai District Office), the Hong Kong Police Force, the Immigration Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health mobilised around 370 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including canned food, cup noodles and corn kernels, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing. One box of masks and hand sanitiser were also provided to persons subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupled with the tireless efforts of the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results by SMS notification. After finishing the compulsory testing exercise at around 8am today, the Government took enforcement action in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone testing according to the requirements of the declaration and the compulsory testing notice. Persons who could present an SMS notification containing a negative testing result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone the compulsory testing could leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer. The enforcement operation was completed at around 11am. Eight persons were found to have not undergone compulsory testing and compulsory testing orders were issued to them. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

The Government hopes that the some 60 households who have not answered the door will contact the Government for arrangement of testing as soon as possible after they read the notices put up by the Government, in the hope of eliminating the possible risk of further spread of the virus in the community.

The Government hopes this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the results at home.

The Government as a whole is united in fighting against the virus despite all the difficulties, and provided testing for all the residents in the district within a short period of time in the hope of achieving zero cases in the district.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will 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 or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.



Government finishes exercise on “restriction-testing declaration” in respect of specified “restricted area” in Sai Ying Pun and enforcement operation for breaches of compulsory testing notice

The Government yesterday (March 17) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 7.15pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sai Ying Pun (i.e. Kwan Yick Building Phase III, 271-285 Des Voeux Road West, Sai Ying Pun) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing were required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area had undergone testing and the test results were mostly ascertained. Moreover, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday, requiring persons who had been present at the above buildings for more than two hours from March 4 to 17, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 19. The Government announced the completion of the compulsory testing exercise at around 7am today (March 18) and carried out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" afterwards to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone compulsory testing in accordance with the requirements of the relevant declaration and compulsory testing notice. The Government announced that the enforcement operation ended at around 11am today.

In this exercise, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the North District Office and the Central and Western District Office), the Immigration Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health mobilised around 300 staff to arrange for implementation of the declaration and enforcement actions for breaches of the compulsory testing notice issued earlier.

The Government provided simple food for persons subject to compulsory testing, including, instant noodles, spaghetti and canned food, etc, so as to facilitate the dinner arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing. One box of masks was also provided to persons subject to compulsory testing to help them fight against the virus.

The HAD also set up a hotline for people restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance.

The Government thanks persons subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding. With everyone's co-operation and efforts, coupled with the tireless efforts of the testing contractors, residents have been informed about their testing results by SMS notification. After finishing the compulsory testing exercise at around 7am today, the Government took enforcement actions in the "restricted area" immediately to verify that all people in the "restricted area" had undergone testing according to the requirements of the declaration and the compulsory testing notice. Persons who could present an SMS notification containing a negative testing result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone the compulsory testing could leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer. The enforcement operation was completed at around 11am. Sixty-five persons were found not having undergone compulsory testing and compulsory testing orders were issued to them. Taking into account the above situation, the Secretary for Food and Health revoked the "restriction-testing declaration" in accordance with Cap. 599J (see attachment).

The Government hopes that the some 70 households who have not answered the door will contact the Government for arrangement of testing as soon as possible after they read the notices put up by the Government in the hope of eliminating the possible risk of further spread of the virus in the community.

The Government hopes that this temporary inconvenience will completely cut the local transmission chains and ease residents' worries and fear, so that they will regain confidence in resuming social and business activities in the area, and return to a normal life.

The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those subject to compulsory testing for their support and understanding, and for their full co-operation during this period in undergoing testing and waiting for the results at home.

The Government as a whole is united in fighting against the virus despite all the difficulties, and provided testing for all the residents in the district within a short period of time in the hope of achieving zero cases in the district.

The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance situation of the compulsory testing notices and the "restriction-testing declaration" by persons subject to compulsory testing. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will 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 or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Introduction of free-flow tolling system proposed

The Free-Flow Tolling (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2021 (the Bill), which seeks to provide legal backing for the implementation of a free-flow tolling system (FFTS) at government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area, will be gazetted on Friday (March 19).

The FFTS is a technology-based solution to enable payment of tunnel tolls without requiring a vehicle to stop at a toll booth, mainly by making use of the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology, with the support of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology. Upon implementation of the FFTS, the use of a government tolled tunnel or the Tsing Sha Control Area by a vehicle will be detected by the boothless tolling facilities through reading of a toll tag, which is a self-adhesive RFID sticker, affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said today (March 18), "Implementing the FFTS is a major Smart Mobility initiative. It will bring convenience to motorists by enabling their payment of tolls remotely with toll tags and facilitating a smoother traffic flow, thereby improving the traffic in the vicinity of tunnels. Moreover, the commuting public may also benefit as the existing toll booths at toll plazas will be demolished, freeing up space for other transport-related purposes such as enhancement of existing bus stops."

The Bill will amend the Road Tunnels (Government) Ordinance (Cap. 368) and Tsing Sha Control Area Ordinance (Cap. 594) as well as their subsidiary legislation to provide for the toll collection and recovery mechanism under the FFTS. It will also amend the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) to empower

the Secretary for Transport and Housing to make regulations for the issue and use of toll tags, as well as the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374E) for requiring vehicle owners to provide their email addresses or mobile phone numbers in vehicle-related applications so as to facilitate the issue of administrative toll payment notifications by a toll service provider to vehicle owners through electronic means.

The Government had consulted the Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on the proposal in December 2020 and January 2021 respectively. Members of the TAC and the Panel generally supported the proposal. The Government has also liaised with the transport trades and other stakeholders through various channels to canvass their views. The community at large also supports the Government to introduce the FFTS.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for the first reading and second reading on March 24.

"After passage of the Bill, the Transport Department will work in collaboration with relevant departments to complete the other necessary preparatory tasks, including engagement of a toll service provider, continued development of the FFTS backend system, procurement of the boothless tolling facilities, collection of email addresses or mobile phone numbers of vehicle owners, with a view to implementing the FFTS at various tunnels starting from end-2022. Meanwhile, the Government will step up publicity efforts through various channels to enhance community awareness of the FFTS, with a view to securing the support of vehicle owners to use toll tags," the spokesman added.

11th round of compulsory testing for staff members of RCHEs, RCHDs and nursing homes to commence shortly

The Government today (March 18) announced that the 11th round of compulsory testing for staff members of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and nursing homes will commence shortly.

In accordance with section 10(1) of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) (the Regulation), the Secretary for Food and Health issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday (March 17), requiring persons who are employed by and will be on duty at RCHEs, RCHDs, nursing homes and day service units attached to the premises of residential care homes during the period from April 2 to 15,

2021, or who will provide services to residents or users through hire-of-service contracts with residential care homes and the aforementioned units during that period (including full-time, part-time and relief staff), to undergo polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 during the period from March 23 to April 1, 2021, according to the requirements and procedure set out in the notice (the Specified Test).

The staff of the aforementioned institutions may choose the following means to undergo the Specified Test:

(1) To undergo the Specified Test in any of the Community Testing Centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en), Temporary Testing Centres (if any) (see the list at www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_supportser/sub_ttc), or mobile specimen collection stations (if any) (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) in accordance with the instructions given by the staff at the centre/station;

(2) To undergo the Specified Test as arranged by institution operators at a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf) and as instructed by the staff of the laboratory;

(3) To obtain a specimen bottle from one of the 121 post offices, 47 general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority or vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations, collect a deep throat saliva sample in the specimen bottle as per the guidelines provided together with the specimen bottle, and return the specimen bottle with the sample (see the specimen bottles distribution and specimen collection locations and times at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);

(4) To undergo the Specified Test at general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

(5) To self-arrange testing provided by a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" at their own expense (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf).

Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice commits an offence and may be subject to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. He or she 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.

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said that the SWD and the Department of Health would issue letters to institutions to inform them of the relevant arrangements and requirements. The spokesman reminded that staff of the said institutions who would undergo testing at community testing centres should make an advance booking via the community testing

centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) for the free testing service. In addition, institution operators should remind their staff members to properly keep the SMS notifications of their test results or their test result reports.

Institution operators are required to keep records of their staff having received the Specified Test and the results within the time frame specified by the Government. Institution operators also have to co-operate with Checking Officers (Compulsory Testing) of the SWD who are enforcing the Regulation at residential care homes.

Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at building in Sham Shui Po

The Sham Shui Po District Office together with the Office of the Licensing Authority of the Home Affairs Department, the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Sham Shui Po Police District and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) conducted an enforcement operation today (March 18) at a building in Sham Shui Po, which was included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation started at around 7am and ended at around 10am today.

Starting from around 7am today, residents of the Diamond Building, 195-199 Nam Cheong Street/2A-2B Un Chau Street/47-49 Tai Po Road, Sham Shui Po, were requested to provide the SMS notification received through a mobile phone or related certification containing the results of COVID-19 tests, to show that they had taken such tests as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notice of the building within the specified period issued by the Government earlier on. The Government arranged for staff to verify the testing certifications of the residents at the entrances/exits of the building, and conducted checks in the building to verify whether residents had undergone testing in compliance with the requirement.

During the operation, test records of around 150 residents were checked. Among them, three persons were found to have violated the compulsory testing notice. The Government has issued compulsory testing orders and/or fixed penalties of \$5,000 to them, requiring them to undergo testing within a specified period. Non-compliance with a compulsory testing order is an offence, and offenders are liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety. Persons subject to testing under

a compulsory testing notice 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.

The Government wishes to thank the many residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notice for their co-operation to fight against the virus together. The Government will continue to enforce the law strictly. All persons subject to compulsory testing should comply with the compulsory testing notice. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notice may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Non-compliance with the order is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Sham Shui Po District Office is grateful for the support and co-operation of the ImmD, the Police and the AMS to enable the enforcement action to be carried out smoothly. The Government understands that the enforcement process may cause some inconvenience to the residents, but hopes that the residents can understand.