

Government enforces "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Sai Ying Pun

The Government yesterday (March 15) 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 9pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sai Ying Pun (i.e. Manifold Court, 36-46 Pok Fu Lam Road; True Light Building, 100-106 Third Street; High Park 99, 99 High Street; and Wing Cheung Building, 19-29 Western Street, Sai Ying Pun) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. In addition, the Government had issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the buildings for more than two hours from March 2 to 15, 2021, to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 17 even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 7.30am today (March 16) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 7.30am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Sai Ying Pun who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results or wear wristbands as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 12.30am today. As at 12.30am today, around 470 residents had undergone testing. No confirmed cases were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 350 households, 65 households did not answer the door. Those include some households with confirmed case or undergoing quarantine. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and will take measures to follow up.

The Government also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or

by other means. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from March 13 to 15, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a negative test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing 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 enforces "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Central and Western District

The Government yesterday (March 15) 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 9pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Central and Western District (i.e. Golden Phoenix Court, 1-2 St. Stephen's Lane; and Blocks A and M, Hing Wah Mansion, 1 Babington Path, Central and Western District) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. In addition, the Government had issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the buildings for more than two hours from March 2 to 15, 2021, to undergo compulsory testing on or before March 17 even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 7am today (March 16) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 7am today, persons in the "restricted area" in Central and Western District who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results or wear wristbands as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 2am today. As at 2am today, around 240 residents had undergone testing. No confirmed cases were found.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 220 households, 45 households did not answer the door. Those include some households with confirmed case or undergoing quarantine. Some units are possibly vacant as well. The Government does not have detailed information in this respect and will take measures to follow up.

The Government also understands that some residents already underwent testing at the mobile specimen collection stations set up in the district or by other means. Therefore, persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from March 13 to 15, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a negative test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing 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 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 11 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.

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.

Eleven premises fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notice on March 15.

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 2 to March 15, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by March 18, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between March 13 and March 15, 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 2 to March 15, 2021 (including but not limited to full-time, part-time and relief staff and visitors), have to undergo testing by March 18, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between March 13 and March 15, 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 who is 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 mobile specimen collection station at 24 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui (near Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade) today (March 16). Please see Annex 2 for details of service scope. The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Southorn Playground in Wan Chai and carpark of Quarry Bay Community Hall will be extended to March 19 (Friday) and March 21 (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 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);
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; or
7. to undergo testing provided by one of the recognised laboratories (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf) or a laboratory specified by the Food and Health Bureau in accordance with the arrangements by the relevant organisation (only applicable to persons subject to compulsory testing who had been present at the third specified premises in Part B of Annex 1).

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."

[Follow-up on COVID-19 preliminary](#)

positive cases at US Consulate General in Hong Kong

The Government today (March 15) said that it has been following up two COVID-19 preliminary positive cases involving staff members of the US Consulate General in Hong Kong in full accordance with the established procedures. The cases have been admitted to the hospital for isolation, and all staff members and visitors who have been present at the relevant premises are required to undergo testing according to the relevant legislation.

The two preliminary positive cases belong to the same family. Having learnt that the two patient are staff members of the US Consulate General in Hong Kong, the Government has immediately liaised with the Consulate General; the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has also contacted the relevant persons, and arranged them to be admitted to the hospital for isolation and medical treatment according to the mechanism.

At the same time, the CHP has initiated an epidemiological investigation on the cases and relevant contact tracing, and advised the US Consulate General in Hong Kong to arrange testing for its staff members as well as deep cleaning and disinfection at the premises in order to protect the staff members of the Consulate General and safeguard public health. The Food and Health Bureau also issues a compulsory testing notice pursuant to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J), which requires any person who had been present at the US Consulate General in Hong Kong between March 2 and 15, 2021 to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

The US Consulate General in Hong Kong has been fully co-operative with the Government on all the above action items to combat COVID-19.

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The public are also reminded to stay vigilant at all times, and if they feel unwell, they should seek medical attention immediately.

Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19

Immunisation assesses serious adverse events relating to COVID-19 vaccination

The Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Expert Committee) convened a meeting today (March 15) to assess serious adverse events relating to COVID-19 vaccination including five death cases and one case in critical condition. The Expert Committee preliminarily considered that the events and the vaccination did not have direct causal association. However, full autopsy reports would be required for death cases before the Expert Committee concludes the causality assessment.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Adverse Events Following Immunisation refers to any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunisation and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine. Under the established mechanism, upon receipt of reports from the Hospital Authority (HA), the Department of Health (DH) will immediately contact the HA for further information and refer the cases to the Expert Committee for deliberation. The Expert Committee would review the case with all available information, including the medical conditions and history of the patient as well as relevant clinical data, available information related to the vaccine and preliminary autopsy findings (if applicable), and conduct causality assessment based on the algorithm of the WHO.

For the five death cases, the first case, which was announced on March 8, involved a 71-year-old man who received treatment in the United Christian Hospital, who passed away on March 8. Based on the preliminary autopsy findings of serious coronary heart disease, which led to pulmonary oedema and death, the Expert Committee considered that the deceased's outcome was not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination.

The second case, which was announced on March 11, involved a 70-year-old woman who had history of hypertension and osteoarthritis of knee. She received treatment in the Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) and passed away on March 11. Based on the preliminary autopsy findings of serious coronary heart disease, which led to myocardial infarction, pulmonary oedema and death, the Expert Committee considered that the deceased's outcome was not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination.

The third case, which was announced on March 7 involved an 80-year-old man who received treatment in the Caritas Medical Centre and subsequently transferred to the Princess Margaret Hospital. He passed away on March 13 due to ischaemic bowel disease. The Expert Committee noted the case and will conduct the causality assessment when the autopsy report is available.

The fourth case, which was announced on March 11, was about a 67-year-

old man who had history of diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidaemia. He received treatment in KWH and passed away on March 13. Based on the preliminary autopsy findings of serious cardiovascular diseases, which might lead to heart failure, arrhythmia and death, the Expert Committee considered that the deceased's outcome was not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination.

The fifth case, which was announced on March 13, was about a 63-year-old man who was treated in the North District Hospital and passed away on March 14. The Expert Committee noted the case and will conclude the causality assessment when the autopsy report is available.

The Expert Committee also discussed a case in critical condition announced on March 9, involved a 51-year-old man who has history of diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidaemia. He experienced shortness of breath since March 6 with cough and sputum. He was admitted to the intensive care unit of Queen Elizabeth Hospital on March 8 for treatment. The provisional diagnosis was acute myocardial infarction. Based on the patient's medical history, the Expert Committee preliminary considered that the patient's outcome was not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination.

According to the information of the HA, in 2020, the provisional number of hospital admission due to myocardial infarction was about 7 300 cases. According to the mortality rates in Hong Kong, there were on average 16.7 persons passed away every day due to ischemic heart diseases and other heart diseases in 2019.

As a whole population, people with acute medical conditions with various severity are admitted to the hospitals every day. The Expert Committee had reviewed the number of death cases reported after the commencement of the vaccination programme and the death rates of the similar group in the same period of previous year, and no unusual pattern has been identified so far. Moreover, the existing available information of the reported cases also does not show any causal relationship with the vaccines. The Expert Committee will continue to closely monitor the situation and collect more data for further assessment.

The Expert Committee has also discussed in today's meeting on the existing risk communication plan upon receipt of notification of clinical events, and agreed on the continual release and update of the figures collected through the designated website regularly. For serious adverse event involving death case, it will be announced via press release as soon as possible.