

Statistics for COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for 18 days since February 26.

In the past 24 hours ending at 8pm today (March 15), the following figures were recorded:

- (i) About 8 900 persons received their first dose of Sinovac vaccine, including about 6 600 persons vaccinated at eight Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 1 800 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme; and
- (ii) About 6 300 persons received their first dose of Comirnaty vaccine at seven CVCs.
- (iii) A total of about 15 200 persons received their first dose of vaccine.

The overall percentage of people who have received Sinovac vaccine at eight CVCs today is about 72 per cent, while the overall percentage of people who have received Comirnaty vaccine at seven CVCs today is about 89 per cent.

So far, a cumulative total of about 206 000 persons have received their first vaccination dose (Annex 1), with about 166 100 persons receiving Sinovac vaccine and about 39 900 persons receiving Comirnaty vaccine.

In the past 24 hours ending at 0000 hours today, there were six cases of ambulance transfer to hospital and all cases were discharged (Annex 2).

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Central and Western District

The Government today (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" (declaration) effective from 9pm, 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; see Annex) 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. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 7am tomorrow (March 16), in order to achieve the goal of zero cases in the district with concerted efforts.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As there are confirmed cases recorded in Golden Phoenix Court and Hing Wah Mansion recently, as assessed, the risk of infection in the relevant area may be higher, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 2am tomorrow. Persons subject to compulsory testing will be arranged to undergo nucleic acid testing at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

"We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible at night after most people are released from work. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 7am tomorrow with a view to allowing residents to start going to work at around 7am. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to an individual who is not a resident in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his or her personal information for contact purposes.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from March 13 to 15, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required

to take the test again. However, they 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. Also, according to the compulsory testing notice issued today, any person who had been present at the above buildings for more than two hours from March 2 to 15, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before March 17.

The Government has prepared simple food for the residents restricted by the declaration. The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which started operation at 9pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government understands the residents in the district are anxious because of the increase in confirmed cases recently and they are worried that the resurgence of pandemic will affect their health and livelihood. 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 appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory 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 compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

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

The Government today (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" (declaration) effective from 9pm, 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; and High Park 99, 99 High Street; and Wing Cheung Building, 19-29 Western Street, Sai Ying Pun; see Annex) 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. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 8am tomorrow (March 16), in order to achieve the goal of zero cases in the district with concerted efforts.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As there are confirmed cases recorded in Manifold Court, True Light Building and High Park 99 recently, as assessed, the risk of infection in the relevant area may be higher, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 00.30am tomorrow. Persons subject to compulsory testing will be arranged to undergo nucleic acid testing at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

"We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible at night after most people are released from work. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 8am tomorrow with a view to allowing residents to start going to work at around 8am. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to an individual who is not a resident in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his or her personal information for contact purposes.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from March 13 to 15, 2021, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they 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. Also, according to the compulsory testing notice issued today, any person who had been present at the above buildings for more than two hours from March 2 to 15, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before March 17.

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Government maintains boarding restrictions for places with severe epidemic situation and compulsory quarantine arrangements

The Government announced today (March 15) that in view of the continued severe global epidemic situation of COVID-19, it will maintain the measure under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to restrict persons who have stayed in the extremely high-risk Group A specified places from boarding flights for Hong Kong, as well as the 21-day compulsory quarantine

requirement under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) and Cap. 599H for persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in places outside China.

A Government spokesman said, "It is necessary for the Government to protect the health of the overall community in Hong Kong by firmly guarding against the importation of the new virus variants. That said, the Government recognises that the measures in relation to Group A specified places are very stringent, and would inevitably affect the return journey of a number of Hong Kong residents there (mostly in the United Kingdom). Since late December last year, the number of newly confirmed cases in the UK, where the majority of the affected Hong Kong residents are situated, has fallen from the high of over 400 000 in a week to about 40 000 in the first week of March. We also noted that over 24 million people in the UK, or over one-third of the population, have received at least the first dose of vaccine. In view of this, the Government is exploring arrangements that could facilitate these residents' direct return to Hong Kong without compromising the public health of the local community. Details of the arrangements will be announced separately at an appropriate juncture."

The spokesman said, "The Government will continue to monitor closely the situation, including the developments of the epidemic situation both globally and locally and changes in the volume of cross-boundary passenger traffic, and will adjust the boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for persons arriving at Hong Kong from other high-risk places when necessary."

For better understanding by the public of the boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements under the relevant regulations for persons that have stayed in different places outside China, the Government has categorised the relevant risk-based boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for the relevant specified places into three groups.

Any person who has stayed in the extremely high-risk Group A specified places (i.e. Brazil, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom) for more than two hours on the day of boarding or during the 21 days before that day are not allowed to board for Hong Kong.

For the very high-risk Group B specified places and the medium to high-risk Group C specified places, all persons arriving at 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. For persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in Group B specified places, they also have to present prior to boarding proof of a negative result of a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft.

Details on the grouping of specified places and their respective boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements can be found

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html.

A male Police Inspector preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19

A 38-year-old male Police Inspector who is posted to the Crime Wing was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19. The police officer's family member was suspected to have come in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case. Hence, he took the initiative for COVID-19 testing and was tested positive for COVID-19 today (March 15). He has no travel history in the past 14 days. He had no contact with members of the public and he wore face mask during his tour of duty. His last working day was March 12.

Police are highly concerned and have the following messages:

(1) While awaiting further assessment and recommendation by the Department of Health (DH), all police officers and civilian staff who might have been in contact with the officer concerned have been arranged to undergo COVID-19 test;

(2) All facilities in the office concerned have been sterilised;

(3) All officers have been reminded to reduce social contact to minimise risks of infection, and to pay attention to personal hygiene. If feeling unwell, they should consult a doctor and report the case immediately;

(4) Police will deploy resources flexibly to ensure provision of policing services of the areas concerned remains unaffected.

Police will maintain close communication with the DH and provide assistance in tracing the pathology. Arrangements will be made for close contacts to be conveyed to quarantine centres to undergo quarantine.