

Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at building in Tsim Sha Tsui

The Yau Tsim Mong District Office together with the Office of the Licensing Authority of the Home Affairs Department, Tsim Sha Tsui Police District, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), conducted an enforcement operation today (February 19) at a building in Tsim Sha Tsui, which was included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation started at around 7am and ended at around 9am today.

Starting from around 7am today, residents of Austin Mansion, 15A Austin Avenue, Tsim Sha Tsui, 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 130 residents were checked. Among them, around 16 persons were found to have violated the compulsory testing notice. The Government has issued fixed penalties of \$5,000 and/or compulsory testing orders 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 Yau Tsim Mong District Office is grateful for the support and co-operation of the Police, the CHP 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.

Employees' Compensation (Amendment) Bill 2021 gazetted today

The Government published the Employees' Compensation (Amendment) Bill 2021 in the Gazette today (February 19).

The Bill seeks to extend the coverage of the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282) to the situation where an employee sustains an injury or dies as a result of an accident when commuting to or from work during the period of "extreme conditions" arising from a super typhoon or other natural disaster of a substantial scale.

A spokesman for the Labour Department said, "As proposed by the Bill, the relevant employee who sustains an injury or dies as a result of an accident when commuting to or from work during the period of 'extreme conditions' will be afforded the same employees' compensation protection on par with that under Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or when the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force."

â€‹The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on February 24.

Minimum Wage Commission appointments announced

The Government announced today (February 19) the appointments to the Minimum Wage Commission (MWC) for a two-year term with effect from March 1, 2021.

The Chief Executive has re-appointed Ms Priscilla Wong Pui-size as the chairperson of the MWC and appointed its 12 members from the labour sector,

the business sector, academia and the Government. The chairperson and the nine non-official members are appointed on an ad personam basis.

Among the non-official members, Mr Chan Wing-on, Mr Lau Chin-shek, Ms Juan Leung Chung-yan, Dr Billy Mak Sui-choi, Ms Ng Wai-yee, Ms Malina Ngai Man-lin and Mrs Katherine Ngan Ng Yu-ying are serving members, while Professor Joyce Ma Lai-chong and Dr Tang Hei-wai are newly appointed.

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, welcomed the appointments. He said, "The MWC assumes the important mission of reviewing and recommending the Statutory Minimum Wage (SMW) rate. The chairperson and members of the MWC for the new term possess a good wealth of knowledge and abundant experience in various fields. I am confident that the MWC will continue to discharge its statutory function effectively."

Dr Law also thanked the two outgoing members, Professor Paul Lau Sau-him and Professor Terry Lum Yat-sang, for their excellent support and sterling contributions to the MWC.

Established under the Minimum Wage Ordinance, the main function of the MWC is to report to the Chief Executive in Council its recommendations about the SMW rate. In performing its function, the MWC must have regard to the need to maintain an appropriate balance between the objectives of forestalling excessively low wages and minimising the loss of low-paid jobs, and the need to sustain Hong Kong's economic growth and competitiveness.

The membership of the MWC for the next term is as follows:

Chairperson

Ms Priscilla Wong Pui-sze

Non-official Members

Mr Chan Wing-on
Mr Lau Chin-shek
Ms Juan Leung Chung-yan
Dr Billy Mak Sui-choi
Ms Ng Wai-yee
Ms Malina Ngai Man-lin
Mrs Katherine Ngan Ng Yu-ying
Professor Joyce Ma Lai-chong (newly appointed)
Dr Tang Hei-wai (newly appointed)

Members who are public officers

Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
(Commerce, Industry and Tourism)
Government Economist

Key statistics on service demand of A&E departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of accident and emergency departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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

The Government today (February 19) announced that the eighth 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 Secretary for Food and Health issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday (February 18), 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 March 3 to 12, 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 February 21 to March 2, 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 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 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 regulations at residential care homes.