

Chinese Temples Committee announces arrangements for Che Kung Temple in Sha Tin during the Lunar New Year period

The following is issued on behalf of the Chinese Temples Committee:

In view of the COVID-19 epidemic development, the Chinese Temples Committee (CTC) announced today (February 1) the latest arrangements for the Che Kung Temple (the Temple) in Sha Tin during the Lunar New Year (LNY) period.

Under the premise of epidemic prevention and in the consideration of the long tradition for worshippers to visit the Temple during the LNY wishing for prosperity in the coming year, CTC has to keep the risk of the worshipping activities in the Temple under control. The event of drawing divination sticks by the Sha Tin Rural Committee in the morning on the second day of the LNY (February 13) will not open for public participation. Please refer to the annex for details.

The public opening hours of the Temple during the LNY 2021 are as follows:

Date	Opening Hours
February 11 (LNY eve)	8am to 6pm
February 12	7am to 6pm
February 13	8am to 6pm
February 13 to 14	11pm on February 13 to 6pm on February 14
February 15 to 26	7am to 5.30pm

In order to reduce the risk of epidemic transmission, all precautionary and anti-epidemic measures in the Temple will be strictly implemented. For instance, temperature screening will be performed at the entrance of the Temple, worshippers will be required to wear face mask and scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code before entering the Temple. During LNY, CTC will limit the number of worshippers at the Temple to no more than half of the maximum capacity and one-way flow will be adopted inside the Temple so as to avoid gathering of a large crowd of worshippers therein. Other precautionary measures include the provision of hand sanitisers at the entrance, regular disinfection of kneeling pads, containers of divination sticks, fortune windmills and drumsticks, as well as adequate supply of liquid soup in the washrooms of the Temple.

The spokesman of CTC reminded worshippers and said, "To effectively prevent the spread of virus, please strictly follow the anti-epidemic measures in the Temple, maintain social distancing. Alcohol must not be used in the incense lighting area to avoid fire hazard. The CTC also appeals to the public to avoid flocking to the Temple during the peak period. Every day is a good day for worshipping."

Distance Business Programme approves nearly 35 000 applications

The Innovation and Technology Commission today (February 1) announced that all the vetting work of the Distance Business Programme had been completed. A total of 34 614 applications have been approved, of which around 95 per cent came from small and medium-sized enterprises. The Programme Secretariat, the Hong Kong Productivity Council, has notified all the applicant enterprises, including those which submitted applications in the last week of October last year, of the application results via email.

A spokesman for the Commission said, "The Programme received an overwhelming response from enterprises. During the application period from May 18 to October 31, 2020, the Programme received a total of 38 572 applications from 32 143 enterprises, of which nearly 10 000 were submitted in the last week of October. Excluding cases in which the enterprises did not accept the application results or provide relevant documents after their applications had been approved, the total funding approved so far is about \$1.88 billion with average approved funding of about \$64,000."

The spokesman added, "Successful enterprises should confirm acceptance of the application results and provide documents required for compliance checking through the online system before the specified deadline. The Programme Secretariat will arrange signing of the funding agreements and fund disbursement as soon as possible. Enterprises can also make an appointment for signing the funding agreement through the online system."

The Distance Business Programme under the Anti-epidemic Fund aimed at supporting enterprises to adopt information technology solutions to continue business and services during the epidemic. Details are available on the Programme's website (u.hkpc.org/dbiz). For enquiries, please contact the Programme Secretariat by phone on 2788 5070 during business hours (9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (except public holidays)) or via email at dbiz@hkpc.org.

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.

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 nine 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 (except the following specified areas), if confirmed cases not epidemiologically linked to each other are found in two or more units in the same building in the past 14 days, the building will be included in the compulsory testing notice. Furthermore, the Government delineates specified areas in accordance with risk assessments. If there is one or more new confirmed cases found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses) in the areas, or there are sewage samples tested positive which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

The Government has delineated earlier four specified areas, namely the "Jordan specified area" bounded by Nathan Road to its east, Austin Road to its south, Ferry Street, Man Cheong Street, Man Wui Street and Canton Road to its west, and Kansu Street to its north, the "Yau Ma Tei/Mong Kok specified area" bounded by Nathan Road to its east, Public Square Street to its south, Ferry Street to its west and Dundas Street to its north, the "Hung Hom specified area" bounded by Station Lane to its northeast, Dock Street and Po Loi Street to its southeast, Winslow Street and Hung Hom South Road to its southwest, and Chatham Road North to its northwest and the "Sham Shui Po specified area" bounded by Yen Chow Street to its northwest, Tai Po Road to

its northeast, Maple Street to its southeast and Lai Chi Kok Road to its southwest.

Nine buildings fulfilling the above criteria will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from January 18 to January 31, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by February 3, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 28 and January 30, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

The Government will set up a mobile specimen collection station at Tin Heng Estate in Tin Shui Wai tomorrow (February 1). The service periods of the mobile specimen collection stations at Kwun Chung Sports Centre in Jordan and Hung Hom Municipal Services Building Sports Centre will be extended to February 3, 2021 (Wednesday) and February 5, 2021 (Friday) 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);
or
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.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau 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 will continually review the compulsory testing arrangement of the above-mentioned specified areas taking into account the epidemic development, including whether new 'specified areas' will be delineated. 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."

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Kwun Tong

The Government today (January 31) 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 7pm, by which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwun Tong (i.e. Block 5, 31 Laguna Street and Block 7, 27 Laguna Street, Laguna City, Lam Tin. See Annex.) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the arrangement by the Government. 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 (February 1), 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."

"The Government has issued compulsory testing notices in respect of Block 5 and Block 7 of Laguna City. However, outbreaks in the area remained severe. From January 18 to 29, 2021, 15 confirmed cases were recorded in Block 5 and Block 7. The Centre for Health Protection has evacuated some residents living in Block 5 of Laguna City within the 'restricted area' to quarantine centre earlier. Residents are worried of the situation. After risk assessment, we think it is necessary to issue a restriction-testing declaration and compulsory testing notice for the 'restricted area' to

confirm all persons in the 'restricted area' have undergone compulsory testing, so as to break the transmission chain in the district and dispel the worries of residents in the district."

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 test 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, or make arrangement for them to self-collect and submit the deep throat saliva specimen.

"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. 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 getting to work around 7am. The Government will make public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the case when employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not to deduct the salary or benefit from the employees.

"The Government understands that quite some residents already underwent testing at the testing station set up at Sai Tso Wan Neighbourhood Community Centre from January 22 to January 24, 2021, and from January 29 to January 31, 2021. Around 1 200 residents from Block 5 and Block 7 of Laguna City have undertaken the testing. The Government thanked them for their co-operation. However, in order to break the transmission chain in Laguna City completely, we think it is necessary to make a new declaration and notice for Block 5 and Block 7 of Laguna City."

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from January 29 to 31, 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. 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 Block 5 and Block 7 of Laguna City for more than two hours from January 29 to 31, 2021, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, they must undergo compulsory testing by the same time as mentioned above.

In order to maintain public and emergency services within the "restricted area", the Government and relevant working staff (such as healthcare officers and other officers, testing service providers engaged by the Government, cleaning service providers, etc.) are allowed to enter and

leave the "restricted area" on condition that personal information and contacts are given, as well as certain infection control instructions are followed (including undergoing testing before leaving the "restricted area" without the need to wait for the test results).

The Government has prepared simple food and cleaning supplies for the residents restricted by the declaration. The Kwun Tong District Office has set up a hotline (Tel: 2756 0665), which starts operation from 7pm 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 worried and anxious because of the increase in confirmed cases in recent days. 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 result patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the concerned persons 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.