

# Government to further enhance compulsory testing in four specified areas

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 compulsory testing notices, which require any person who had been present at 40 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 following specified areas and restricted 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 or restricted areas in accordance with risk assessments, in order to strengthen compulsory testing in a targeted manner. Details are as below:

1. Specified areas: If there is one or more new confirmed cases 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. The Government has delineated earlier two specified areas, namely the "Jordan specified area" bounded by Nathan Road to its east, Jordan Road to its south, Ferry Street to its west and Kansu Street to its north 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.
2. Restricted areas: Subject to the epidemic development and the need for infection control, the Government will delineate restricted areas and make a "restriction-testing declaration". Persons within the areas are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the arrangement by the Government, and can only leave after the relevant test results are mostly ascertained. All premises within the restricted areas, whether or not confirmed cases were found therein, would be included in the compulsory testing notice. Any person who had been present in the restricted area for more than two hours in the past 14 days (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to also undergo compulsory testing.

Delineating different areas according to the above mechanism can effectively take forward compulsory testing based on the epidemic and the risk level, and identify on a "compulsory testing on mandatory basis" silent transmitters which cannot be easily located in the community otherwise.

Upon risk assessment, the Government has decided to expand the scope of compulsory testing for "specified areas" starting from January 26, including keeping one specified area, expanding one specified area and delineating two new specified areas, in order to further cut the transmission chain in the community. Details are as below:

1. Expand the original "Jordan specified area" to an 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 (see Annex 1);
2. Delineate 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 (see Annex 2);
3. Delineate 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 (see Annex 3); and
4. Continue to keep the "Sham Shui Po specified area" (see Annex 4).

Starting from January 26, for buildings within the above four "specified areas", if there is one or more new confirmed cases found, or there are sewage samples tested positive which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government will accord priority to the sewage testing of buildings in the areas with confirmed cases in the past 14 days. The buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice if it is confirmed that the risks remain.

A spokesman for the Food and Health bureau (FHB) said, "The Government will seriously follow up on the compliance of compulsory testing notices by persons subject to compulsory testing, and continually review the compulsory testing arrangement of the above specified areas taking into account the epidemic development, including whether new 'specified areas' or 'restricted areas' will be delineated."

"Since the infection risk in the community of the specified areas might be higher, the Government encourages residents in the areas to undergo testing proactively and promptly, even if they are not subject to compulsory testing. The mobile specimen collection stations will provide free testing services for all residents in the areas regardless of whether they are subject to compulsory testing or not."

Thirty-one buildings fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notice on January 26. Furthermore, eight buildings with sewage samples tested positive and located outside the specified areas were included in the compulsory testing notice. Details are as follows:

Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Annex 5 for more than two hours at any time during the period from January 13 to January 26, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by January 29, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 24 and January 26, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

In addition, the Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" (the declaration), effective from 7pm on January 26, by which people within the specified "restricted area" in Yau Ma Tei (i.e. 9-27 Pitt Street and 3 Tung On Street. See Annex 6.) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the arrangement by the Government. The Government has also published a compulsory testing notice to all premises within the "restricted area", which requires persons who had been present in the "restricted area" for more than two hours in the past 14 days, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, to undergo compulsory testing by January 28, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 24 and January 26, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

To facilitate members of the public to comply with the compulsory testing notices published earlier which are still in effect, the Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at Wuhu Street Temporary Playground in Hung Hom, Hung Hom Municipal Services Building Sports Centre, and Yan Fu House of Tin Fu Court in Tin Shui Wai today (January 27). The service period of the mobile specimen collection station at Maple Street Playground will be extended to January 30, 2021 (Saturday), and the service period of the mobile specimen collection station at Kwun Chung Sports Centre and the mobile specimen collection vehicles at the section of Canton Road between Jordan Road and Saigon Street (also called Jade Street) will also be extended to February 1, 2021 (Monday). 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 7. 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](http://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/](http://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](http://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](http://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.

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 notices.

"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/](http://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. The FHB will publish compulsory testing notices regarding particular groups when necessary taking into account the epidemic developments and the testing participation rate."

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## **Government extends social distancing measures under Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance**

The Government announced on January 26 that it will gazette directions and specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) to maintain the social distancing measures currently in place. The directions and specifications will take effect on January 28, 2021 for a period of seven days till February 3, 2021.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong remains serious. The latest 7-day average number of local cases with unknown source of infection was close to 29 and a number of confirmed cases were found in certain districts over a short period of time, which showed that silent transmission in the community is still active."

"The Government tightened social distancing measures on December 10, 2020 and extended the measures for 14 days on December 24, 2020 and January 7, 2021 respectively. The Government further extended the measures for seven days on January 21, 2021. Taking into account the latest public health risk

assessment, the Government will maintain existing requirements and restrictions applicable to catering business premises and scheduled premises, as well as the requirements for group gatherings and mask wearing for seven days. We will continue to closely monitor the development of the epidemic situation and review and adjust the various measures in place from time to time. We will announce the latest social distancing measures in a timely manner."

The details of the extended requirements and restrictions are as follows:

(I) Catering business and scheduled premises

(1) The requirements and restrictions applicable to catering business and scheduled premises (details at Annex 1) will be maintained during the seven-day period from January 28, 2021 to February 3, 2021, including the following requirements: from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, save for specific premises (details at Annex 2), a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business; no more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises; bars or pubs will continue to be closed; and except club-houses and hotels or guesthouses, all scheduled premises regulated under Cap. 599F must be closed.

Persons responsible for carrying on catering businesses and managers of scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under Cap. 599F would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

(II) Group gathering

(2) Unless exempted, the prohibition on group gatherings of more than two persons in public places will continue during the seven-day period from January 28, 2021 to February 3, 2021. The requirement is also applicable to group gatherings in catering business and scheduled premises regulated under Cap. 599F in which the relevant requirements or restrictions are not complied with.

Any person who participates in a prohibited group gathering; organises a prohibited group gathering; owns, controls or operates the place of such a gathering; and knowingly allows the taking place of such gathering commits an offence under the Cap. 599G. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who participate in a prohibited group gathering may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty of \$5,000.

(III) Mask-wearing requirement

(3) The mandatory mask-wearing requirement under Cap. 599I will be extended for a period of seven days from January 28, 2021 to February 3, 2021. During the aforementioned period, a person must wear a mask all the time when the person is boarding or on board a public transport carrier, is entering or

present in an MTR paid area, or is entering or present in a specified public place (i.e. all public places, save for outdoor public places in country parks and special areas as defined in section 2 of the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208)).

Under Cap. 599I, if a person does not wear a mask in accordance with the requirement, an authorised person may deny that person from boarding a public transport carrier or entering the area concerned, as well as require that person to wear a mask and disembark from the carrier or leave the said area. A person in contravention of the relevant provision commits an offence and the maximum penalty is a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). In addition, authorised public officers may issue fixed penalty notices to persons who do not wear a mask in accordance with the requirement and such persons may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty of \$5,000.

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## **CHP investigates 64 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, January 26, the CHP was investigating 64 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 10 223 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 10 222 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, one is an imported case.

A total of 875 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (January 12 to 25), including 834 local cases of which 322 are from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop.

Regarding the severe epidemic situation, 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 CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link [wa.me/85296171823?text=hi](https://wa.me/85296171823?text=hi), they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds.



Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.

Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

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## Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Yau Ma Tei

The Government today (January 26) 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 Yau Ma Tei (i.e. 9-27 Pitt Street and 3 Tung On Street. 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 6am tomorrow (January 27), 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 15-27 Pitt Street and 3 Tung On Street. However, outbreaks in the area remained severe. From January 11 to 25, 2021, more than 40 confirmed cases were recorded in the above-mentioned areas, involving three buildings. The Centre for Health Protection has evacuated some residents living at Pitt Street within the 'restricted area' to quarantine centre earlier. Residents are worried of the situation."

"We are aware that those buildings in the 'restricted area' are

relatively old and lack of maintenance, and many are 'three-nil buildings'. Sub-divided units are common and the infection risk in the community is quite high. The sewage samples found in the relevant buildings were also tested positive, which implied possibly infection risk. After risk assessment, we think it is necessary to issue a restriction-testing declaration for the 'restricted area' 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 midnight today. 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 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 6am tomorrow with a view to allowing residents to start getting to work around 6am. 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.

"In the past weekend, more than 7 000 persons already underwent testing in the specified 'restricted area' in Jordan. The Government thanked them for their co-operation. However, in order to break the transmission chain in Yau Ma Tei district completely, we think it is necessary to make a new declaration for other areas in the district of which the infection risk are rather high. Persons who had undergone previous testing, including the testing under compulsory testing notices, before the declaration came into effect are still required to undergo testing again."

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 basic cleaning tools for the residents restricted by the declaration. The Home Affairs Department has set

up a hotline (Tel: 2572 8427) and a dedicated hotline (Tel: 3755 6816) for the ethnic minorities. The hotline services will start 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. Under the epidemic, businesses in the area have been hit hard and brought to a standstill. Residents' livelihood is also affected. 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. Any person who breaches the restriction-testing declaration commits an offence and may be liable to a maximum fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

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## **Caritas Medical Centre announces an incident on suspension of ventilation system in a Computed Tomography scan examination suite**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) made the following announcement today (January 26) regarding the suspension of the ventilation system in a Computed Tomography (CT) scan examination suite of CMC:

On January 23, replacement work for the air handling unit commenced in a CT scan examination suite of the Department of Radiology of CMC. Two units of portable air purifiers with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter were planned to be installed to aid temporary air ventilation. A confirmed COVID-19 patient received CT scan examination in the location concerned at around 1am on January 24. This patient required high flow oxygen with filtered mask and her duration of stay was around five minutes. On January 25 afternoon, it was noted that the air purifiers have not been installed as planned. Investigation reveals that a total of 71 patients have received examination in the same location. All of these patients had been wearing surgical masks and generally stayed in the room for up to a few minutes for

the procedure. The staff who conducted patient examination as well as disinfection has worn personal protection equipment properly.

Infection Control Unit and the Facility Management team of CMC had conducted site visit and airflow test in the location concerned. Upon joint risk assessment by hospital Infection Control Unit, the Chief Infection Officer of the Hospital Authority and the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), no staff member nor patient was identified as close contact. One staff member and 10 patients were identified as other contact and are required to receive COVID-19 test and medical surveillance. The hospital will also contact all involved inpatients as well as staff members who worked in the area concerned for tests. Discharged patients would be referred to the CHP for follow-up.

The hospital had arranged thorough cleansing and disinfection in the location concerned and will continue cooperating with the Centre for Health Protection on follow up actions.