

## **Territory-wide flag-selling activity cancelled**

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by Mother's Choice Limited that the territory-wide flag-selling activity in public places scheduled to be held today (January 23) has been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the Public Subscription Permit issued by the SWD, including any updated information, have been published on the GovHK website ([www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search](http://www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search)).

For enquiries, please contact Miss Yung of the organisation at 3915 5739.

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

The Government announced today (January 23) that in view of the developments of the global COVID-19 epidemic situation, it is necessary to 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.

Due to the emergence of different new virus variants in Brazil, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom (i.e. Group A specified places) which may be much more transmissible according to experts' preliminary assessment, and in view of their already prevalent spread in those places, as a precautionary measure, the Government had gazetted the relevant specification that any person who has stayed in Group A specified places 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.

A Government spokesman reiterated, "The Government recognises that maintaining the above stringent requirement may inevitably affect the return journey of a number of Hong Kong residents in these places. However, as the new virus variants are more transmissible, and the epidemic situation in the four places mentioned above remain severe, it is necessary for the Government to firmly guard against the importation of COVID-19 cases in order to protect the well-being of Hong Kong residents."

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.

Apart from the boarding restrictions for the extremely high-risk Group A specified places as mentioned above, for the very high-risk Group B specified places and the medium to high-risk Group C specified places, as the global epidemic situation remains severe, the Government also considers that the current boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for the relevant places should continue. 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 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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html).

The spokesman said, "The Government will continue to closely monitor the developments of the global and local epidemic situation, including the extent and pattern of the spread of the disease in a certain place, and will frequently review the epidemic prevention and control requirements for persons returning to Hong Kong from different parts of the world, and adjust them as needed."

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**Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified**

## “restricted area” in Jordan

The Government has 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), by which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Jordan (i.e. an area bounded by Woosung Street to its east, Nanking Street to its south, Battery Street to its west and Kansu Street to its north. 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 within about 48 hours, in order to achieve the goal of zero cases in the district with concerted efforts.

The spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a restriction-testing declaration."

"The Government earlier undertook further action to strengthen 'compulsory testing on mandatory basis' and testing efforts in 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). Buildings within the specified area would be covered by the compulsory testing notices if there is one confirmed case found in a unit, or where no confirmed case was found but the sewage samples were constantly tested positive. The 'core area' bounded by Temple Street to its east, Ning Po Street to its south, Reclamation Street to its west and Pak Hoi Street to its north was delineated, within which about 70 buildings in total were subject to compulsory testing regardless of whether confirmed cases were found.

"However, outbreaks in the district remained severe. From January 1 to 20, 2021, the 'Jordan specified area' recorded 162 confirmed cases, involving 56 buildings. Residents in the district are worried and some of them have misunderstanding towards the epidemic situation."

"In the past few days, the ratio of the sewage samples found in the buildings located in the 'restricted area' being constantly tested positive was higher than that of the other areas of the 'Jordan specified area', which implies possibly infected persons might be present at those places. At the same time, 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. 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 (January 23). Persons subject to compulsory testing will be arranged to undergo nucleic acid test in batches 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, including those in elderly homes in the district, 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 for adequate testing resources to carry out the testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results within 48 hours, with a view to allowing residents to start getting to work around 6am on January 25 (Monday). 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 two weeks, more than 20 000 persons already underwent testing in the testing centres in Yau Ma Tei. The Government thanked those who complied with the compulsory testing notices and those who underwent testing voluntarily in a co-operative manner. However, 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 break the transmission chain in the community completely."

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 of the Hospital Authority, testing service providers engaged by the Government, cleaning service providers and staff members of residential care homes for the elderly 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: 2399 6949 and 2835 1473) and a dedicated hotline (Tel: 3755 6816) for the ethnic minorities. The hotline services will start operation from 6am 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, their livelihood is seriously affected as businesses in the area have been hit hard and brought to a standstill. 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 Food and Health Bureau will also issue a compulsory testing notice covering all premises in the "restricted area". Any person 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, must undergo compulsory testing during the same period of time (i.e. before midnight of today (January 23)).

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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## Government gazettes compulsory testing notices

The Government has exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and published in the Gazette compulsory testing notices, which require 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.

The Government has delineated earlier 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. The threshold for compulsory testing in the areas was lowered in order to cut the transmission chain in the community as soon as possible. For buildings within the two specified areas (except the "core area" bounded by Temple Street to its east, Ning Po Street to its south, Reclamation Street to its west and Pak Hoi Street to its north), if there is one or more confirmed cases found in a unit in the past 14 days, or where no confirmed case was found but the sewage samples were constantly tested positive, the buildings would be covered by the compulsory testing notices under Cap. 599J. Four buildings in the "Jordan specified area" and two buildings in the "Sham Shui Po specified area"

fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notices today (January 22).

As for all districts in Hong Kong outside the "Jordan specified area" and the "Sham Shui Po specified area", if confirmed cases not epidemiologically linked to each other were found in two or more units in the same building in the past 14 days, the building would be included in the compulsory testing notice. Three buildings fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notices today.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said today, "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. 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."

Details of the compulsory testing notices 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 9 to January 22, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by January 25, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 20 and January 22, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notices.

For implementation of the compulsory testing notices for the above specified areas, the Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at Yuet Chui Court in Chai Wan, Kik Yeung Road 5-a-side Football Pitch in Yuen Long and Verbena Heights in Tseung Kwan O tomorrow (January 23). The service period of the mobile specimen collection station in Maple Street Playground will be extended to January 25, 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 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](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.

Members of the Auxiliary Medical Service and the relevant officers of departments such as DH, Home Affairs Department, Social Welfare Department, Housing Department and Hong Kong Police Force, 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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## **CHP investigates 61 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 22, the CHP was investigating 61 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 9 929 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 9 928 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, six are imported cases.

A total of 760 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (January 8 to 21), including 721 local cases of which 261 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.

In view of the latest epidemic developments in the Mainland, starting tomorrow (January 23), inbound travellers who have been to Shanghai in the past 14 days arriving via land boundary control points will be provided with specimen collection containers. They are required to collect their deep throat saliva samples by themselves in accordance with the instructions and return the samples for conducting COVID-19 testing. The arrangement for distributing specimen collection containers to inbound travellers who have been to Tianjin, Heilongjiang Province, Liaoning Province, Beijing, Hebei Province, Shanxi Province, Jilin Province, Guangxi Province and Shaanxi Province in the past 14 days arriving via land boundary control points, which has come into effect earlier, remains unchanged.

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.