

# 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.

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## The Government to further expand the scope for compulsory testing

The Government will exercise the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and will publish in the Gazette compulsory testing notices, which require any person who had been present at specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said on January 19, "A number of confirmed cases were recently found in certain districts in Hong Kong, including Yau Ma Tei and Jordan, over a short period of time. To cut the transmission chain in the community as soon as possible, the Government is determined to strengthen 'compulsory testing on mandatory basis'".

Further to the decision made by the Government to lower the threshold for compulsory testing in the 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 in Yau Ma Tei to Jordan ("the Jordan specified area"), taking into account risk assessments and expert advice, the Government has adjusted the threshold for compulsory testing in the area to further expand the scope for compulsory testing. Details are as below:

1. In the "Jordan specified area", a "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 (see Annex 1) will be delineated. All buildings and structures within the area, around 70 in total, were all covered by the compulsory testing notices regardless of whether

confirmed cases were found.

2. For buildings within the "Jordan specified area" but outside the "core area", 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 which implied that persons infected with COVID-19 might be present at the relevant places, the buildings would be covered by the compulsory testing notice. Four buildings fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notices.

The Government will also delineate a specified area in Sham Shui Po, 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 ("Sham Shui Po specified area"). Within the specified area, buildings with one or more confirmed cases found in a unit in the past 14 days would be included in the compulsory testing notice. Six buildings fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notices.

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. One building fulfilling the above criteria was included in the compulsory testing notices.

"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:

(1) Any person who had been present at any of the buildings or structures within the "core area" delineated in Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from January 6 to January 19, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by January 22, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 15 and January 19, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notices.

(2) Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Annex 2 for more than two hours at any time during the period from January 6 to January 19, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by January 22, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between January 17 and

January 19, 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 extend 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) to January 22, 2021 (Friday). The Government will also set up mobile specimen collection stations at Maple Street Playground and Pei Ho Street Sports Centre in Sham Shui Po on January 20. 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 3. 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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## **Government extends social distancing measures under Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance**

The Government announced on January 19 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 21, 2021 for a period of seven days till January 27, 2021.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong remains volatile. The latest 7-day average number of local cases with unknown source of infection was 17 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. 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 21, 2021 to January 27, 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 21, 2021 to January 27, 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 21, 2021 to January 27, 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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## Government restricts persons who have stayed in Brazil or Ireland from boarding flights for Hong Kong

The Government will gazette the specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to restrict persons who have stayed in Brazil or Ireland from boarding flights for Hong Kong.

A Government spokesman said on January 19, "Cases caused by the new virus variant with high transmissibility were found in Brazil and Ireland recently. It is necessary for the Government to take stringent measures to restrict persons who have stayed in Brazil or Ireland from boarding flights for Hong Kong."

The Secretary for Food and Health has made the relevant specifications under the above Regulation, which will take effect from 0.00am on January 23, 2021. Under the relevant specifications, all persons who have stayed in Brazil or Ireland for more than two hours on the day of boarding or during the 21 days before that day will not be allowed to board for Hong Kong; persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in Brazil or Ireland on the day of arrival at Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to present before boarding a negative result proof of a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft and confirmation of room reservation in a designated quarantine hotel, and (irrespective of arriving at Hong Kong via the airport or land boundary control points) have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels.

Apart from the above specifications made for Brazil and Ireland, the current boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for the other relevant places remain unchanged. For better understanding by the public on the boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for persons arriving at Hong Kong from different places outside China under the above Regulation, the Government has categorised the relevant specified places into three groups according to the relevant risk-based boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements. The brief details are set out at Annex. Details 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 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 tighten the compulsory quarantine requirements for persons arriving at Hong Kong from other high-risk places when necessary."

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## Testing period specified in compulsory testing notices for 22 buildings in Yau Ma Tei expired

â€‹The Government published compulsory testing notices on January 15 and 16 for a total of 22 buildings or constructions located within the specified area in Yau Ma Tei at which one or more confirmed cases were found. According to the notices, the compulsory testing periods for 20 buildings and two buildings in the specified area expired yesterday (January 18) and today (January 19) respectively.

The Yau Tsim Mong District Office (YTMDO) liaised and worked with testing contractors to set up a district mobile specimen collection station at Kwun Chung Sports Centre and arranged mobile specimen collection vehicles at the section of Canton Road between Jordan Road and Saigon Street (also called Jade Street) to conduct free testing for the residents. Residents who were required to undergo compulsory testing may also take the test for free at the testing centre set up at Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre.

Over the past few days, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and its YTMDO had arranged more than 40 helpers who speak Nepali, Urdu and other languages to support residents at the above sites, and together with staff of HAD's Office of the Licensing Authority, conducted home visits and explained relevant arrangements at buildings or constructions covered by the compulsory testing notices. The staff distributed relevant information of the compulsory testing notices in multiple languages and registered details of the residents to facilitate follow-up on compulsory testing in the future. The HAD had also arranged staff who speak Nepali and Urdu at the testing centre at Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre; the district mobile specimen collection station at Kwun Chung Sports Centre; and the mobile specimen collection vehicles parked at Canton Road near Saigon Street, to assist residents in registration for taking tests.

According to preliminary records, a total of around 2 220 residents underwent testing at the above venues in compliance with the compulsory testing notices. Besides, over 16 430 residents voluntarily underwent testing at the above venues. From January 16 to 19, over 18 000 residents in total underwent testing at the above venues.

The Government thanks the support by the residents within the specified area in Yau Ma Tei to undergo testings and reiterates the serious follow-up by the Government on compliance with the compulsory testing notices to curb the spread of the virus.

The Government reminds the public to undergo testing in compliance with the notice. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice 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/her to undergo testing within a specified timeframe. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.