

Regional flag-selling activities cancelled

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by three flag day organisers that regional flag-selling activities in public places originally scheduled to be held today (January 2) have been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

Three charities had been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today. They are, on Hong Kong Island, Apostolic Faith Church of Hong Kong Limited; in Kowloon, Yan Kwong Social Service Limited; and in the New Territories, Wai Ji Christian Service.

For enquiries, please contact the organisations concerned. Contact information of the organisations is as follows:

Region	Name of organisation	Contact person	Contact number
Hong Kong Island	Apostolic Faith Church of Hong Kong Limited	Miss Chan	2336 4000
Kowloon	Yan Kwong Social Service Limited	Miss Chung	2382 8877
New Territories	Wai Ji Christian Service	Miss Chan	2777 9039

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_flagdays) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

Around 30 per cent of public comply with compulsory testing notices to undergo testing in the first day

According to the compulsory testing notices published on December 30 and 31, 2020, the Government has arranged mobile specimen collection stations or other testing facilities for the 43 specified premises to provide testing for persons covered by the compulsory testing notices.

According to the Home Affairs Department (HAD)'s records, on the first day of the compulsory testing period (i.e. December 31, 2020), a total of over 14 600 persons who are required to undergo compulsory testing have undertaken the test, which accounts for 29.2 per cent of the estimated number of residents of corresponding buildings covered by the testing notices. We thank the many residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notices for their co-operation to fight against the virus together.

The HAD today (January 1) appeals to members of the public who are required to undergo testing according to the compulsory testing notices to undergo testing at the testing centers within the period specified in the compulsory testing notices.

In addition, the HAD reminds the public again that the Government will take resolute follow-up action to ensure compliance to all testing notices. To strictly enforce the notice, the HAD is now cross checking the records of people who have undertaken the test as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notice issued for Ming Lai House and Fung Chak House at Choi Wan (II) Estate in Wong Tai Sin, and will trace for those who might not have done so.

The COVID-19 virus is high in transmissibility. Although many patients are asymptomatic, they still infect people around them. Therefore, participating in testing is a responsible act for oneself, family members as well as the community. The Government appeals to 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 at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Mobile specimen collection stations and community testing centres provide testing for persons subject to compulsory testing free of charge

With the prolonged local COVID-19 epidemic situation, there has been a widespread of confirmed cases across all districts. Some of the confirmed cases have been asymptomatic which indicates the existence of many silent transmission chains within the community. The Government has exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to cover a number of buildings across the territory under compulsory testing notices and require residents, workers and visitors to undergo testing. To facilitate persons covered under the compulsory testing notices to undergo testing, the Government has arranged for testing service providers to set up mobile specimen collection stations at a number of locations in various districts to provide free and convenient testing services for them.

The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations already in operation or to be set up in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are at the Annex. The Government has taken into account the testing service need of individual buildings covered under compulsory testing notices and the existing testing services near the buildings in the course of setting up mobile specimen collection stations.

The Government will decide whether it is necessary to increase the number of stations, adjust or extend the operation periods of the stations after reviewing their usage and the public's demand for the testing service.

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. The operating hours of the centres are from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm daily. The centres provide booking as well as on-site registration services. Members of the public are only required to input simple personal information, and select the testing centre and time slot in the 24-hour appointment booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). The centres accord priority to those who make bookings in advance.

A Government spokesman said, "The testing service providers will provide specimen collection services by combined nasal and throat swabs at the mobile specimen collection stations and community testing centres for testing free of charge. Generally speaking, mobile specimen collection stations only provide testing services for local residents and workers who are subject to compulsory testing."

People whose test results are negative will be informed by SMS notifications through their mobile phones. Persons subject to compulsory testing must properly keep the relevant records. If any specimen tested shows a preliminarily positive result, the specimen will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

The Government reminds the public that they can undergo COVID-19 testing for free through various means. For details on other free-of-charge testing means other than mobile specimen collection stations and community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html. If a person has symptoms, he or she should seek medical attention immediately and should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or community testing centres.

For the 40 buildings covered under the compulsory testing notice issued on December 30, 2020 (amended on December 31) and the three buildings covered under the compulsory testing notice on December 31, 2020, persons subject to compulsory testing can receive free testing by January 4, 2021 at mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres or via other testing routes specified in the notices, with ample time provided for them to comply with the requirements set out in the notice.

The spokesman urged all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases) to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.

CHP investigates 42 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 1, the CHP was investigating 42 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 8 889 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 8 888 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, six had a travel history during the incubation period.

A total of 947 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (December 18 to 31), including 871 local cases of which 327 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 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).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited the specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid test 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) 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, 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.

Survey Officer of PlanD tests positive for COVID-19

The Planning Department (PlanD) said today (January 1) that a Survey Officer has today tested positive for COVID-19.

The officer concerned works on the 14th floor of the North Point Government Office and the area concerned is not open to the public. He last performed duties on December 22, 2020. He has been wearing surgical masks when performing duties and has properly maintained social distancing with people he had contacted with. His work did not involve any contact with members of the public over the past 14 days. His body temperature was normal when undergoing temperature screening during work.

The workplace of the officer concerned, including the common areas, will be fully cleaned and sterilised in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). In addition, arrangements will be made for colleagues working with the officer to work from home and they will

undergo COVID-19 testing.

The PlanD has been concerned about the COVID-19 epidemic all along and has strictly implemented various disease prevention measures. The department has also reminded its staff to pay attention to personal hygiene and stay vigilant, and if feeling unwell, to seek medical advice and inform the department as soon as possible. The PlanD will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP and co-operate with its quarantine work.