

Government to gazette compulsory testing notice

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

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said today (December 26), "Upon contact tracing by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), a number of confirmed cases not epidemiologically linked to each other were recently found at Lei Sang House of Lei Yue Mun Estate, 33 Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong within a short period of time. Members of the public who had been to the relevant place might be subject to higher infection risks. The Government will publish a compulsory testing notice under Cap. 599J, which requires persons who had been to the above premises during the specified period to undergo testing immediately."

"The Government published on December 15 and December 16 two compulsory testing notices, requiring any person who had been present at Ming Lai House of Choi Wan (II) Estate, 55 Clear Water Bay Road, Wong Tai Sin and Ming Yan Lau of Jat Min Chuen, 17 Jat Min Chuen Street, Sha Tin for more than two hours during the specified periods to undergo testing by December 20 and December 21 respectively. In view of the possible long incubation period of the virus, the relevant persons have to undergo a second test."

"Based on the recent experience, persons subject to compulsory testing would feel more relieved if they receive SMS (mobile phone text message) confirming the negative result of the tests. Such SMS can also facilitate law enforcement. Therefore, the Government has updated the testing routes applicable to compulsory testing notices, which only include those where SMS confirming negative test results would be issued to persons who underwent testing afterwards."

Details of persons subject to compulsory testing are as follows:

1. Any person who had been present at Lei Sang House of Lei Yue Mun Estate, 33 Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong, for more than two hours at any time during the period from November 24 to December 26, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to undergo testing by December 31, 2020;
2. Any person who had been present at Ming Lai House of Choi Wan (II) Estate, 55 Clear Water Bay Road, Wong Tai Sin, for more than two hours at any time during the period from November 20 to December 15, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to undergo testing during the period from December 27 to December 29, 2020;

3. Any person who had been present at Ming Yan Lau of Jat Min Chuen, 17 Jat Min Chuen Street, Sha Tin, for more than two hours at any time during the period from December 1 to December 16, 2020 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers) have to undergo testing during the period from December 27 to December 29, 2020.

If persons subject to compulsory testing under group (1) have previously undergone the above mentioned test between December 22 and December 26, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice. If persons subject to compulsory testing under groups (2) and (3) have previously undergone the above mentioned test between December 24 and December 26, they would also be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

1. To visit any mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and time, and the specimen collection points and time at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
4. To undergo testing at any GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health 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)

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at accident and emergency departments of Hospital Authority or during hospital stay, using specimen bottles distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of 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 the 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 notice 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 at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info/.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing 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.

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 development and the testing participation rate."

CHP investigates 59 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 26, the CHP was investigating 59 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 8 541 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 8 540 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, six had a travel history

during the incubation period.

A total of 1 104 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (December 12 to 25), including 1 021 local cases of which 390 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.

Kwong Wah Hospital announces a patient tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman of Kwong Wah Hospital made the following announcement today (December 26) regarding a female patient tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A female patient presented with fever had been admitted to an obstetric ward in the hospital due to membrane rupture today. The hospital had arranged the patient to be admitted into a single room in the labour ward and receive

the COVID-19 test. The patient had given birth to an infant this morning, who had been admitted to a single room in the paediatric ward.

The test result of the patient was preliminarily positive for COVID-19. The hospital had transferred the patient, who was in stable condition, for treatment under isolation. The hospital had also arranged the infant to receive COVID-19 test and the test result was negative for COVID-19. The hospital had also arranged to transfer the infant to an isolation room.

The hospital's infection control team has conducted contact tracing and confirmed that no patient had been classified as close contact of the patient. The hospital has also conducted contact tracing for the relevant staff members, to review if appropriate personal protective equipment had been used. The contact tracing is currently in progress.

The hospital has completed thorough cleaning and disinfection in the ward and delivery room concerned. The hospital would continue to closely monitor the health condition of the staff members and patients and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest development.

Labour Department reminds foreign domestic helpers to comply with social distancing measures

The Labour Department (LD) today (December 26) again reminded foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to comply with social distancing measures announced by the Government.

An LD spokesman said, "The Government had amended the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) to prohibit group gatherings of more than two persons in public places. A person who participates in a prohibited group gathering may be charged a fixed penalty, the amount of which has been raised to \$5,000. At the same time, the fixed penalty charged against a person who fails to wear a mask in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) has also been raised to \$5,000. The Government will conduct mobile broadcast in multiple languages and joint operations at popular FDH gathering places tomorrow (December 27) across the territory to call upon FDHs to comply with the relevant requirements."

"We remind FDHs to strictly observe the requirements and appeal to them to avoid gatherings (including in boarding facilities), food sharing and other social activities on their rest days and stay at home for rest as far as possible to safeguard their personal health. We also encourage employers

and FDHs to discuss rest day arrangements, so as to minimise the health risk of participating in social activities."

At the same time, employers are reminded that they must not compel their FDHs to work on a rest day. An employer who compels his/her FDH to work on a rest day without the agreement of the FDH or fails to grant rest days to the FDH is in breach of the Employment Ordinance and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000.

Should FDHs and their employers have any enquiries on employment matters, they may contact LD through the dedicated FDH hotline at 2157 9537 (manned by 1823), by email to fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk or through the online form on the dedicated portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk).

Caritas Medical Centre announces a nurse tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman of Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) made the following announcement today (December 26) regarding a nurse tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A male nurse of the Isolation Ward attended Accident and Emergency Department on December 25 due to fever. He was arranged to undergo COVID-19 test and the test result was preliminarily positive for COVID-19. He has been admitted for treatment under isolation with stable condition.

The last duty day of the nurse concerned was December 23. He performed general clinical nursing care duties in isolation ward including nursing care to COVID-19 confirmed patients. After receiving the notification, the hospital's infection control team conducted contact tracing and noted that the nurse concerned was equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment in accordance with infection control guidelines. Two nurses who had a short face-to-face conversation with the nurse concerned without mask protection during meal time were classified as close contact and required quarantine.

Besides, one of the family members of the nurse concerned, who is also a nurse working in the Orthopaedics and Traumatology ward of CMC, was classified as a close contact and received the COVID-19 test. The test result is pending.

As the nurse concerned had meals with family members and friends during incubation period, there is not adequate information to determine the source of infection at this stage. The hospital will work with Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up. As a precautionary measure, viral tests were arranged for the staff members of the ward concerned and 16 of them were tested negative.

The hospital completed thorough cleansing and disinfection for the ward concerned, staff pantry and changing room. The hospital would continue to closely monitor the health condition of the staff members and patients and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.