

Disbursement of subsidies under subsidy scheme for promotion of contactless payment in public markets in progress

The spokesman of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 22) announced that the application period for the subsidy scheme for promotion of contactless payment in public markets under the third round of the Anti-epidemic Fund expired yesterday (December 21). Applicants have to submit the relevant contracts and complete the installation by January 21, 2021. The FEHD will disburse the subsidies as soon as practicable after inspections are conducted to ensure completion of installation.

The spokesman said, "The FEHD received over 3 500 applications during the application period. Together with the stalls of public markets that have already been provided with contactless payment means and do not intend to apply for the subsidies, it is expected that the number of public market stalls with contactless payment means available will account for about 30 per cent of the let-out stalls of FEHD markets."

"The Government launched the subsidy scheme for promotion of contactless payment in public markets on October 15, with a view to reducing the risk of virus transmission in markets. A one-off subsidy is provided to tenants of FEHD market stalls (including cooked food stalls) at a flat rate of \$5,000 per stall for use to meet the initial set-up costs as well as service and other fees in relation to the provision of at least one contactless payment means. In order to allow more time for eligible tenants of public markets to prepare their applications, the FEHD has previously extended the deadline for application to December 21."

In addition, with approaching of Christmas and New Year, the FEHD reminded again catering business and scheduled premises operators to strictly comply with the requirements and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (Regulation). Members of the public should also strictly comply with the restrictions in relation to group gatherings and mask wearing to reduce the risk of virus transmission. During the coming long Christmas holidays, the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement and publicity efforts to ensure that responsible parties comply with relevant anti-epidemic regulations and measures, and will deploy additional manpower to conduct joint operations with the Police. Stringent enforcement actions will be taken against offenders to ensure compliance of relevant regulations. The FEHD also urged catering business and scheduled premises operators and the public to abide by the law.

The spokesman said that the latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to social distancing measures in catering

business and scheduled premises under the Regulation will extend till January 6, 2021.

The spokesman said, "Catering business operators must strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions, which include requirements that 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 from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day; and the number of people participating in a banquet in catering premises is limited to 20; no more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises, the total number of customers allowed in catering premises must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity; no live performance and dancing is allowed; a mask must be worn within the premises except when the person is consuming food or drink at a table therein; tables must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or some form of partition which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table; body temperature screening must be conducted before the person is allowed to enter the catering premises; and hand sanitisers must be provided, etc. In addition, a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must display the poster containing the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code at the entrance of the premises or at a conspicuous location."

The spokesman reminds catering business operators and the public to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together. He also appeals to catering business operators to comply with relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner, with a view to keeping their staff, customers and the public safe. Members of the public also have to comply with the related regulations and directions on group gatherings and mask wearing at catering premises.