

Enhanced inspection during Christmas and New Year period against illegal sale of alcohol to minors and smoking offences (with photos)

The Department of Health's (DH) Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office today (December 21) said that it will strengthen inspections and enforcement actions during the Christmas and New Year period against the illegal sale of alcohol to minors and smoking offences in pubs and bars.

â€‹ A spokesman for the DH said that in addition to routine enforcement actions, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Inspectors will carry out tobacco and alcohol control publicity and enforcement operations in places with more festive activities, especially Lan Kwai Fong in Central, Knutsford Terrace in Tsim Sha Tsui, and Mong Kok.

â€‹ The operations include conducting inspections at venues such as pubs and bars as well as convenience stores. Leaflets will be distributed to staff members and customers to remind them that no smoking is allowed in statutory no-smoking areas. Venue managers are also urged to implement the smoking ban in indoor public areas and comply with the law against the sale of alcohol to minors to safeguard the health of their staff and customers.

â€‹ The spokesman reminded the public that if they are found smoking in statutory no-smoking areas, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Inspectors will prosecute offenders without prior warning. Offenders will be liable to a fixed penalty of \$1,500. The spokesman also reminded traders that the Dutiable Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 commenced on November 30 this year. The maximum fine for selling or supplying intoxicating liquor to a minor, or selling intoxicating liquor via vending machines, is \$50,000 on summary conviction. Those who obstruct inspectors during enforcement are liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 on summary conviction.

â€‹ "If alcohol is sold or supplied via face-to-face distribution such as in premises or stores like supermarkets, liquor stores and convenience stores, a sign containing both the Chinese and English versions of the prescribed notice must be displayed in a prominent location easily seen by the public. If alcohol is sold or supplied via remote distribution such as SMS, group messages, websites and telephone or mail order, the prescribed notice must be displayed in a reasonably legible manner, or its contents must be read out or played as a sound recording. The maximum fine for non-compliance with the prescribed notice requirement is \$25,000 on summary conviction," the spokesman added.

â€‹ The new legislation aims to prevent access by young people to alcohol. The DH reminds the public and stakeholders to comply with the new

law. The DH also urges everyone, especially young people, to adopt an alcohol-free healthy lifestyle.

After the new legislation came into operation, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Inspectors have inspected over 410 locations and found 142 cases which failed to properly display the prescribed notice. The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office has explained the requirements to venue managers concerned and provided samples of the notice. In addition, in the first 10 months this year, the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office conducted more than 28 100 statutory no-smoking area inspections and issued fixed penalty notices or summonses to more than 7 700 smoking offenders.

For enquiries or complaints, please call the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office's hotline 2961 8823 or 1823.

