

## [FEHD and catering businesses join hands to strengthen anti-epidemic measures \(with photo\)](#)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) met with representatives of the catering businesses, including restaurants, bars, karaoke establishments and nightclubs on October 13, to discuss how the Government and the catering sector could further strengthen anti-epidemic measures in catering premises, and implement various targeted measures to address recommendations made by public health expert advisers on critical control points, with a view to minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in catering premises.

A spokesman for the FEHD said that the trade was reminded again at the meeting to strictly comply with the requirements under relevant anti-epidemic regulations. According to the directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to catering business under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap. 599F), catering business operators and practitioners have to strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions. Among these, selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises from 0.00am to 4.59am must be ceased; the number of customers at any premises must not exceed half of its normal seating capacity; no more than four persons may be seated together at one table at catering premises; tables must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5m or some form of partition which could serve as effective buffer between one table and another table; a mask must be worn at all times within the premises, except when the person is consuming food or drink; and body temperature screening must be conducted before the person is allowed to enter the catering premises and hand sanitisers must be provided. According to the Regulation, directions and the requirements under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition in Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G), members of the public also have to comply with the related restriction on group gatherings that no more than four persons may be seated at one table at catering premises.

In order to help catering business operators and practitioners understand the anti-epidemic measures in food premises clearly, the FEHD has uploaded related training materials on anti-epidemic measures onto the FEHD's website ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/advice\\_COVID19\\_FoodPremises.pdf](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/advice_COVID19_FoodPremises.pdf)), for hygiene managers and hygiene supervisors of licensed restaurants to familiarise themselves with the measures and strictly implement them in the catering premises.

In addition, in response to expert advisers' advice to improve the ventilation in catering outlets so as to achieve better anti-epidemic effect, the FEHD will make an announcement within this week to launch a webpage for providing a platform for catering outlets to voluntarily report the air change per hour of the ventilation system and the related air disinfection

equipment provided as required at their catering premises for public inspection.

At the invitation of the FEHD, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) also joined the meeting to introduce to the trade a mobile app under development by the OGCIO on exposure risk notification, which allows catering businesses to participate according to their needs. Members of the public can also participate voluntarily and make records of their own accord, so that it would be easier for them to master their travel history and they could contact the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) themselves if needed. The trade said in the meeting that they will collaborate actively to facilitate the CHP's close contact tracing work. Some bars and karaoke establishments have already called on their customers to fill in electronic health declaration forms to facilitate communication when necessary. The Government and the trade will continue to communicate on operational needs and promote the trade's active participation. In addition, the Government and the trade have also exchanged views on promoting the use of contactless payments in different types of catering outlets.

The spokesman strongly appeals to the frontline staff of catering businesses to actively participate in the Targeted Group Testing Scheme. The deadline for online registration has been extended to October 31. High-exposure groups including restaurant operators, staff and personnel working in FEHD markets, hawker licensees could register through the FEHD website before the deadline for the voluntary testing services. High-exposure groups who had already registered and undergone voluntary testing can register again.

The Government encourages practitioners in bars and pubs and their patrons to undergo virus testing. The testing agency, Prenetics Limited, delivered over 2 100 specimen bottles at bar areas in Lan Kwai Fong, Tsim Sha Tsui and Wan Chai last weekend. Among them, about 1 770 specimen bottles were distributed to staff members while around 390 were distributed to patrons. The testing agency of the FEHD will deliver specimen bottles at bar areas in Soho area, Kennedy Town and Prince Edward this weekend. Details will be announced separately later.

The FEHD will continue to step up inspections at catering outlets and take enforcement actions against offenders. The department will also conduct joint operations with the Police as necessary to ensure that food business operators, practitioners and the patrons strictly comply with the directions under the regulation. Taking enforcement actions at premises that sell liquors as an example, since the re-opening of bars on September 18, the Police have conducted 1 278 inspections and 37 joint operations with the FEHD. Altogether, procedures of prosecution were initiated against operators of about 30 related premises.

The FEHD spokesman appeals to food business operators and practitioners to actively support various anti-epidemic measures, including fully implementing the targeted measures on the critical control points and participation of all bar staff and practitioners in the testing scheme, as well as compliance with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of

disease in a concerted and persistent manner, with a view to keeping workers, customers and the public safe.

