

FEHD and Police continue to join hands to step up inspections at catering business premises and take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic measures (with photos)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Police conducted a joint operation at small hours today (October 17) to step up inspections and take stringent enforcement actions at catering business premises including bars and upstairs restaurants in Wan Chai District. The FEHD reminds food business operators and food handlers again to strictly comply with the relevant requirements (including ceasing dining-in from 0.00am to 4.59am) under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation), and the public to comply with the restriction in relation to group gatherings under the anti-epidemic regulations and directions when patronising restaurants.

During the operation at small hours today, the FEHD and the Police inspected 10 catering business premises (including bars) and initiated the procedure on prosecution against the operator of 1 upstairs catering business premises in Tang Lung Street and 1 upstairs bar in Jaffe Road respectively for selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises outside permitted hours (i.e. between 0.00am and 4.59am), staff not wearing a mask within the premises, the number of customers exceeding half of its normal seating capacity, distance between tables less than 1.5 metres, etc. Besides, the Police also issued Fixed Penalty Notices to 87 customers inside the upstairs bar for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) on group gathering.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "According to the directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to catering business under the Regulation, food business operators and food handlers 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 (no more than two persons may be seated together at one table in bars); 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."

Under the Regulation, licensees and operators of food business premises must strictly comply with the series of requirements and restrictions. Contravening the requirements and restrictions is a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who violate the group gathering restriction of Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition in Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) are subject to a fixed penalty of \$2,000.

The spokesman said that the FEHD will continue to step up inspections at food business premises across the territory and conduct joint operations with the Police to ensure that food business operators, food handlers and the public strictly comply with the directions under the regulation and will take enforcement actions against offenders so as to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in catering business premises.

The FEHD spokesman appealed to food business operators and food handlers to comply with the relevant Regulation on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner, with a view to keeping workers, customers and the public safe, and to members of the public to comply with the related regulations and directions relating to group gatherings at catering business premises.

