

FEHD continues to step up inspections and reminds catering business operators and public to continue complying with anti-epidemic regulations

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) continues to step up inspections at catering premises (including bars) across the territory and reminds the catering business 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) (the Regulation), and the public to comply with the various restrictions in relation to group gatherings and mask-wearing under the anti-epidemic regulations and directions when patronising catering premises.

The FEHD and the Police conducted a joint operation last night (November 21) again and inspected 48 catering premises (including bars) in Soho area in Central. Procedure on prosecution was initiated against one catering business operator for breaching the requirement on the distance between tables under the Regulation.

Inclusive of the cases in the above paragraph, the FEHD conducted a total of 3 066 inspections at catering premises (including bars) across the territory on Friday (November 20) and yesterday (November 21), while procedures on prosecution were initiated against nine catering business operators for breaching the Regulation, mainly about violating the requirements on the number of persons at one table and the distance between tables, as well as not wearing a mask at all times within the premises except when consuming food or drink at a table therein.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "According to the current directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to catering business under the Regulation, food business operators must strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions, including live performance/dancing must not be allowed in any catering premises (including bars / pubs) as well as clubs / nightclubs; dining-in must cease from 0.00am to 4.59am every day; no more than two persons may be at one table for a bar/pub or night establishment/nightclub while no more than four persons may be at one table for other catering premises; the total number of customers allowed in catering premises must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity; 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 1.5m or some form of partition which could serve as 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."

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will continue to proactively take stringent enforcement actions in the coming week, stepping up inspections at catering premises across the territory and conducting joint operations with the Police if necessary, to ensure that catering business operators and the public strictly comply with relevant regulations. Enforcement actions will be taken against offenders so as to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in food premises.

If catering business operators contravene the Regulation, they are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who violate the group gathering restriction of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition in Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) are subject to a fixed penalty of \$2,000.

The spokesman appealed 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.

