

FEHD continues to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (January 17) that the FEHD continued to step up its inspections territory wide in the past three days and conducted joint operations with the Police in Central and Western District, Eastern District and Yau Tsim District, so as to take stringent enforcement actions against operators, staff and customers of catering businesses and scheduled premises in defiance of the anti-epidemic regulations. The spokesman again reminded parties concerned to remain vigilant and 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). The FEHD will continue to conduct enforcement operations proactively, and urges premises operators not to defy the law.

In the operations over the past three days, the FEHD and the Police inspected a total of 57 catering premises during the joint operations; and the FEHD on its own inspected a total of 1 430 catering premises and 544 other premises. The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against operators of 15 catering premises suspected of breaching the requirements under the directions. Among the requirements suspected to have been breached, eight related to mask-wearing, three related to the distance or partition between tables, two related to display of notices concerning mode of operation, one related to ensuring scanning the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers and one related to the maximum number of persons allowed to be seated together at one table. The FEHD also required these premises to take corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission. They had to, on the subsequent day of being identified of the irregularities by the enforcement officers, cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, and allow no more than two persons to be seated together at one table, ranging from three, seven to 14 days. During the joint operations, the Police also took enforcement actions, including issuing fixed penalty notices.

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business contravenes the Regulation, he or she is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who are present at any premises of a catering business must comply with directions applicable to them. Non-compliance with the relevant directions would be an offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000. The liability may be discharged by paying a fixed penalty of \$5,000. In addition, for customers in breach of the requirement on the maximum number of persons per table within catering premises, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). For customers not wearing a mask when they

are eating or drinking not at a table therein or they are not eating or drinking, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I).

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement on catering premises and take stringent enforcement actions against offenders. To minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19, the spokesman strongly appealed to operators and staff members of all premises as well as members of the public to continue to comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease and observe all prevailing social distancing measures in a persistent manner and fight the virus together.