

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

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (January 1) that the FEHD continued to step up its inspections and conduct joint operations with the Police, so as to take stringent enforcement actions against operators, staff and customers of catering businesses and certain scheduled premises in defiance of the anti-epidemic regulations during festive occasions including New Year's Eve and New Year holidays. 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 continues to conduct enforcement operations proactively, and urges premises operators not to defy the law.

In the operations yesterday (December 31) and today, the FEHD and the Police inspected a total of 37 catering premises during the joint operations; and the FEHD on its own inspected a total of 629 catering premises and 173 scheduled premises. The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against 16 operators of catering premises suspected of breaching the requirements under the directions. Among the requirements suspected to be breached, six related to mask-wearing, five related to the distance or partition between tables, two related to display of notice concerning mode of operation, one related to display of notice concerning air change or air purifiers, one related to ensuring scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers, and one related to both display of notice concerning mode of operation and ensuring scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers. 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 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. In addition, the FEHD also issued fixed penalty tickets to three customers suspected to breach the requirement of scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code. 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 being prosecuted 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 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 during and after the New Year Holidays and fight the virus together.