

FEHD continues to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations during long Easter holidays

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (April 17) that the FEHD continued to step up its inspections territory-wide and conducted joint operations with the Police in various districts across the territory, so as to take stringent enforcement actions against operators, staff and customers of catering businesses and other premises in defiance of the anti-epidemic regulations during the long Easter 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 Prevention and Control of Disease (Vaccine Pass) Regulation (Cap. 599L) and more. The FEHD will continue to conduct enforcement operations proactively, and urges premises operators not to defy the law.

The FEHD and the Police inspected a total of 96 catering premises and five other premises during the joint operations yesterday (April 16); and the FEHD on its own inspected a total of 409 catering premises and 82 other premises. The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against operators of five catering premises suspected of breaching the requirements under the directions. Details are as follows:

Matters involved	Number of prosecutions
Ensuring scanning of "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers	2
Mask-wearing	1
Distance or partition between tables and ensuring scanning of "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code by customers	1
Distance or partition between tables	1

The FEHD also required the premises to take corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission. Premises found with irregularities 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 3pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, ranging from three, seven and 14 days. In addition, the FEHD also issued fixed penalty notice (FPN) to one customer suspected of breaching the requirement of scanning "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code. During the joint operations, the Police also took enforcement actions, including issuing FPNs.

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business contravenes the Regulation or the requirements and directions of the Vaccine Pass, he or she is liable to be prosecuted and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who are present at catering premises or other specified premises must comply with directions applicable to them. Non-compliance with the relevant directions is 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 Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). For customers not wearing a mask when they are not eating or drinking 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).

Apart from the enforcement actions abovementioned, the FEHD also conducted joint operations with several government departments over the long Easter holidays at public places where people including foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) congregate during weekends and public holidays to carry out publicity and educational work, appealing to them to raise awareness of epidemic prevention and comply with the various anti-epidemic regulations and restrictions.

The FEHD, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force, the Labour Department, relevant District Offices, and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, conducted joint operations yesterday at various public places in Central and Western, Wan Chai, Eastern, Yau Tsim, Mong Kok, Sham Shui Po, Shatin, Sai Kung and Tsuen Wan districts, near popular FDHs gathering places during public holidays. Apart from arranging for cleansing service contractors to strengthen the street cleansing services at the relevant spots, the FEHD also stepped up patrols to combat unlicensed hawking activities. During the operation, two FPNs were issued to persons who breached public cleanliness offences. FDHs have also been reminded by other government departments to comply with the regulations on mask wearing and the prohibition of gatherings in public places.

To minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the spokesman strongly appealed to all sectors of the community to stay vigilant and comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner. The FEHD will continue to strengthen its publicity efforts and enforcement actions. All sectors are reminded to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together.