

FEHD expands scope of “Professional Certification System” to cover general restaurant licence applications

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (January 31) that the scope of the "Professional Certification System" (PCS) will be expanded to cover general restaurant licence applications starting from tomorrow (February 1). Applicants can choose between the current system (i.e. to issue a full licence upon the completion of the final on-site check by an FEHD officer) or the PCS which adopts an approach of "licence first, inspection later" for the issue of full licences.

According to the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), any person who intends to carry on a food business is required to obtain a relevant food business licence issued by the FEHD. With a view to streamlining application procedures and shortening processing times, as well as facilitating compliance with the licensing requirements, the FEHD has introduced the PCS in March 2023 as an additional option for applicants of light refreshment restaurant and food factory licences to obtain full licences. Under the PCS, the FEHD accepts a Certificate of Compliance and final layout plans provided by an authorised person or a registered structural engineer as the certification for compliance with all health requirements for the issue of a full licence. After issuing the full licence, the FEHD staff will conduct on-site audit checks to confirm premises' compliance with all health requirements.

If any information in the relevant documents is found to be incorrect, false or misleading, or if the declaration made is found to be false after on-site audit checks, the FEHD will carry out follow-up action, such as consideration of instigating prosecution, cancellation of the licence issued or referring the case to other departments concerned for follow-up.

The spokesman said, "The PCS measure will be applicable to full licence application of general restaurant, light refreshment restaurant and food factory starting from tomorrow. Subject to the smooth implementation and support from the trade, the FEHD will consider further extending the new measure to other food business licences."

For details of the PCS, please visit the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk).