

# FEHD reminds catering business operators and customers to strictly comply with anti-epidemic regulations and measures

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (October 28) reminded catering business operators and practitioners to strictly comply with anti-epidemic regulations and make every effort to implement the Government's anti-epidemic measures and the public health experts' various recommendations targeting at critical control points. With Halloween approaching, the FEHD has communicated with trade representatives to remind catering businesses and their customers to comply with various social distancing measures and strongly appealed to them to exercise self-discipline. The trade representatives have indicated that they will fully cooperate. Meanwhile, the FEHD will join hands with the Police closely to step up their respective inspections and to conduct joint operations at various bar areas proactively, in the coming Halloween weekend and on its eve. Stringent enforcement actions will be taken to ensure compliance of relevant regulations, so as to avert the risk of rebound of infection cases.

A spokesman for the FEHD said that in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, the Government announced yesterday (October 27) that it would continue to relax social distancing measures in a gradual and orderly manner. The latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to catering business premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) will come into effect on October 30. According to the latest directions, catering business operators and practitioners have to strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions. Among these, selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises from 2am to 4.59am must cease; except for bars and pubs which are subject to separate requirement (see the third paragraph), any person within catering premises must wear a mask at any time except when the person is consuming food or drink therein; no more than four persons may be at one table at bars or pubs, while no more than six persons may be at one table in other catering premises; the total number of people allowed in catering business premises will be capped at 75 per cent of the normal seating capacity; 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.

The spokesman particularly emphasised that to further reduce the public health risks arisen from mask-off activities in bars/pubs and night establishments/nightclubs, under the new requirement, any person within such premises must wear a mask at any times except when the person is consuming

food or drink at the table therein. If persons responsible for carrying on catering businesses and managers of scheduled premises contravene the requirements under Cap. 599F, they are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. The FEHD and the Police may also take enforcement action under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) against persons who fail to wear a mask in accordance with the requirements. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine at level 2 (\$5,000) or be issued with a fixed penalty notice (\$2,000).

Trade representatives have expressed to the Government that they will fully cooperate with the Government regulations and measures. They will not only make wide appeals to remind their customers to comply with the regulations, but also give their best to persuade their customers to exercise self-discipline. These include advising them not to gather and to wear a mask, at adjoining public places outside the premises, so as to protect personal and public health.

The Government has all along been communicating with public health experts and the catering sector on recommendations made by public health expert advisers on critical control points, and advised the catering businesses to implement various measures with a view to minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within the premises. The FEHD has issued an advisory letter to the trade today on the latest directions and recommendations for catering businesses, including the following measures targeting at critical control points:

- (1) arrange for hygiene supervisors/hygiene managers to familiarise themselves with the FEHD's training materials on anti-epidemic measures ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/advice\\_COVID19\\_FoodPremises.pdf](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/advice_COVID19_FoodPremises.pdf)) and implement them in their catering premises;
- (2) participate actively in the voluntary declaration scheme on air changes in licensed catering premises launched by the FEHD to enable the public to identify catering premises with air changes or air purification devices meeting the recommendations made by public health expert advisers;
- (3) pay attention to the compliance of the requirement that customers must wear a mask at any times except when consuming food or drink at the table within bars/pubs (as well as night establishments/nightclubs);
- (4) encourage customers entering food premises to fill in electronic health declaration forms self-developed by the trade or use the mobile app on exposure risk notification to be launched by the Government, so as to assist the Centre for Health Protection in the tracing of close contacts; and
- (5) adopt contactless payment methods to reduce the risk of virus transmission via contacting cash.

For more details, please visit the FEHD's website ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide\\_general\\_reference/CateringBusiness\\_direction\\_20201028.html](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/CateringBusiness_direction_20201028.html)) with a powerpoint and a video from Professor Yuen Kwok-yung of the University of Hong Kong.

The spokesman appealed to the frontline staff of catering businesses to actively participate in the Targeted Group Testing Scheme. The deadline for

online registration has been extended to November 30. Restaurant operators may register through the FEHD's website before the deadline for the voluntary testing service. High-exposure groups who had already registered and undergone voluntary testing may register again. For details, please visit the FEHD's website

([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19\\_test/info\\_20200926.html](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19_test/info_20200926.html)). The FEHD and the bar trade have exchanged views and will take effective measures to increase the participation rate of staff of bar and pubs.

The FEHD spokesman appealed to food business operators and practitioners to fully implement the targeted measures on critical control points, actively participate in the virus testing services for targeted groups and give their best to appeal to customers to fully cooperate with the Government's regulations and measures. All must 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 at catering premises.