

FEHD reminds catering business operators and public to continue to comply with anti-epidemic regulations

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 31) again reminded catering business and scheduled premises operators to 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). Members of the public should also strictly comply with the restrictions in relation to group gatherings and mask wearing to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

During the past three days (December 28 to 30), the FEHD inspected a total of 2,630 catering premises and 97 other premises, and initiated procedures on prosecution against four persons suspected of breaching the requirements (including provision of dine-in services after 6pm and in regard to the distance or partitioning between tables) under the Regulation. The FEHD also conducted blitz operations yesterday in Mong Kok and Yuen Long on places of public entertainment, during which prosecution procedures were initiated against operators of two claw-machine shops for violating the directions on closure of scheduled premises under the Regulation.

In addition, the FEHD issued 12 fixed penalty notices (one issued at food premises and 11 issued at FEHD markets) against violations on mask-wearing requirements during the past three days.

During the coming long New Year holidays, the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement and publicity efforts to ensure that responsible parties comply with relevant anti-epidemic regulations and measures, and will deploy additional manpower to conduct joint operations with the Police. Stringent enforcement action will be taken against offenders to ensure compliance with relevant regulations. The FEHD also urged catering business and scheduled premises operators and the public to abide by the law.

The FEHD spokesman said, "The latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to social distancing measures in catering business and scheduled premises under the Regulation have been extended till January 6, 2021. Catering business operators must strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions, which include requirements that a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day; the number of people participating in a banquet in catering premises is limited to 20; no more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises, and the total number of customers allowed in catering premises must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity; no live performance or dancing is allowed; a mask must be worn within the premises except when the person is consuming food or drink at a table therein; tables must be arranged in a way to ensure

there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or some form of partition which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table; body temperature screening must be conducted before a person is allowed to enter the catering premises; and hand sanitisers must be provided. In addition, a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must display the poster containing the 'LeaveHomeSafe' venue QR code at the entrance of the premises or at a conspicuous location. Relevant scheduled premises operators must strictly comply with the direction on closure of scheduled premises, which include places of public entertainment."

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business or scheduled premises contravenes the regulations under the Regulation, he or she is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Customers in breach of the requirement on no more than two persons per table within catering premises are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). Moreover, customers not wearing a mask when they are not eating or drinking at a table therein or they are not eating or drinking 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 continued, "Under section 4(1) of the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172), without a licence granted, no person shall keep or use any place of public entertainment. Offenders are liable to be prosecuted and upon conviction to a maximum fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months, and for a continuing offence, a fine of \$2,000 for every day."

The spokesman reminded catering business operators and the public to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together. He also appealed to catering business operators to 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 and mask wearing at catering premises.