

FEHD reminds food business operators and food handlers to continue adopting anti-epidemic precautionary measures

In view of the fact that the local epidemic situation has continued to subside and is stabilising gradually, the Government has announced earlier that it would continue to relax social distancing measures in a gradual and orderly manner. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (September 10) reminded food business operators and food handlers to remain vigilant and strictly comply with the directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation). The FEHD will step up inspections at food premises and take stringent enforcement actions against offenders.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "According to the latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to catering business premises under the Regulation, starting from tomorrow (September 11) to September 17, the number of persons allowed to be seated together at one table will be increased from two to four in catering business premises."

The spokesman also reminded licensees and operators of food premises to strictly comply with the series of requirements and restrictions, including the number of customers at any catering premises must not exceed half of the normal seating capacity of the premises; tables available for use or being used by customers within any catering premises must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or partition(s) which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table at the premises; dine-in services must be ceased from 10pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day; a mask must be worn at all times within the premises except when the person is consuming food or drink; body temperature screening must be conducted before the person is allowed to enter the catering premises and hand sanitisers must be provided, etc.

Further to providing updated guidelines on dine-in services to licensees and operators of food premises earlier so as to give them a practical framework and recommendations to keep workers, customers and public safe, the FEHD today sent a letter to them again to remind them to comply with the relevant regulations. It will be a criminal offence for contravening the abovementioned requirements. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. The FEHD will step up inspections and take stringent enforcement actions.

To minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in food premises, the spokesman strongly appeals to food business operators and food handlers, as an important part of the community's efforts in fighting the virus, to comply with the relevant Regulation on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner, with a view to maintaining high standards of hygiene and cleanliness.