

FEHD steps up enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations and joins inter-departmental joint operations around Lunar New Year

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) took stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations during the Lunar New Year holidays. A spokesman for the FEHD said today (February 16) that the FEHD has stepped up inspections in various districts and conducted joint operations with the Police across the territory in the past four days. The Government 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), and customers patronising catering premises to comply with the various anti-epidemic regulations and restrictions, including the requirements on group gatherings and wearing of masks.

During the past four days (February 12 to 15), the FEHD (including joint operations involving other departments) inspected more than 3 000 premises (including 2 650 catering premises and 420 other premises), and initiated procedures on prosecution against 28 catering business/other operators suspected of breaching the requirements under the Regulation (relating to providing dine-in services after 6pm, distance or partitioning between tables, mask-wearing, maximum number of persons seated together at one table, and non-closure of scheduled premises). The FEHD also issued fixed penalty notices to four persons for violating the relevant group gathering requirement.

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 within catering premises in breach of the requirement on maximum number of persons seated together at one table 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 otherwise 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 stressed that the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement and publicity efforts and will deploy additional manpower to conduct joint operations with the Police. Stringent enforcement actions will

be taken against offenders to ensure compliance with relevant regulations. He also reminded operators concerned and the public to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together.