

FEHD steps up enforcement over past few days against illegal discharge of wastewater into roadside gullies by food premises

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (May 27) that the FEHD has conducted blitz operations over the past few days in Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong districts. These operations aim to crack down on the illegal discharge of wastewater into roadside gullies by food premises in the districts by strengthening inspection and taking stringent enforcement action with a view to maintaining environmental hygiene.

The FEHD officers conducted blitz inspections to a total of 110 licensed/permitted food premises in Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong districts for five consecutive days (from May 20 to 24) and mounted intelligence-led enforcement operations against food business operators for illegal discharge of wastewater into roadside gullies, as well as carrying out scullery and food preparation in yards leading to the discharge of wastewater into storm drains. During the operations, FEHD officers issued 12 fixed penalty notices and instituted three prosecutions in total against the relevant offenders pursuant to the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation (Cap. 132BK) and the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) respectively.

The spokesman said, "Illegal discharge of wastewater into roadside gullies by food premises will not only affect the environmental hygiene at the subject location, but may also pollute the sea. The FEHD has zero tolerance towards such an illegal act and will take immediate enforcement action without prior warning upon discovery."

The spokesman reminded that food business operators must comply with the licensing conditions, and disposal of food waste and wastewater in rear lanes and surface channels are not allowed. Food premises must be operated in accordance with the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) and the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), as well as provisions of its subsidiary legislation relating to food safety and environmental hygiene, or else they may face prosecution.

The FEHD has implemented a demerit points system against licensed food premises. A prescribed number of demerit points will be registered against a licensee upon conviction of an offence under relevant legislation. If the licensee has accumulated certain demerit points within a period of time, the licence will be suspended immediately. If the violation persists, the licence will be cancelled. Moreover, under the warning letter system of the FEHD, the department will consider cancelling licences of food premises breaching licensing requirements or conditions repeatedly without rectification after

receiving warning letters.

In accordance with the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation (Cap. 132BK), any person who disposes of waste including wastewater in public places commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. The FEHD may also issue a \$3,000 fixed penalty notice to an offender under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570).

The spokesman emphasised that the FEHD will continue to step up inspections and enforcement action in Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong districts, and consider extending the operation to other districts to ensure the environmental hygiene of food premises and adjacent areas. Staff will also provide health education to operators of food premises during routine inspections, reminding them not to discharge wastewater illegally.