

[FEHD steps up inspections and reminds catering business operators and public to continue complying with anti-epidemic regulations \(with photos\)](#)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Police conducted joint operations last night (November 20) and at small hours today (November 21) to step up inspections at catering premises including bars in Lan Kwai Fong in Central and reminded the catering business 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 the public to comply with the various restrictions in relation to group gatherings and mask-wearing under the anti-epidemic regulations and directions when patronising catering premises.

During the operations, the FEHD and the Police inspected 52 catering premises (including bars). A total of 12 verbal warnings were given, while procedures on prosecution were initiated against two catering business operators for breaching the requirement on the number of persons allowed at one table in the premises under the Regulation.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "According to the latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health yesterday in relation to catering business under the Regulation that are applicable to the five-day period from November 22 to November 26, live performance/dancing must not be allowed in any catering premises (including bars or pubs) as well as clubs or nightclubs. The following requirements and restrictions will continue to apply: dining-in must cease from 0.00am to 4.59am every day; no more than two persons may be at one table for a bar/pub or night establishment/nightclub while no more than four persons may be at one table for other catering premises; the total number of customers allowed in catering premises must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity; 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 1.5m 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, etc."

In addition, to actively promote the participation of bar/pub staff in the voluntary free COVID-19 testing, the FEHD will arrange its testing agency, Prenetics Limited, to deliver specimen bottles at bar area in Lan Kwai Fong and a mobile van will be parked near the bar area tomorrow afternoon to encourage practitioners in bars/pubs and their patrons to undergo the voluntary testing.

The testing agency will be responsible for the provision of one-stop service covering specimen collection and testing. The testing agency will deliver specimen bottles to operators of bars/pubs for collecting deep throat saliva samples of their staff, and then collect the samples in the subsequent one to two days for testing. Moreover, the testing agency will also deliver the specimen bottles to patrons of bars/pubs who are interested in taking the test and they can return their specimen bottles by themselves to the mobile collection van of the testing agency parked at Hoi Chak Street in Quarry Bay from 9am to 5pm between November 23 and November 28. Specimens with preliminary positive results will be relayed to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health to re-test and confirm the result. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection.

Since October 1, the testing agency has delivered over 15 000 specimen bottles at over 1 000 bars and pubs, and collected about 8 000 specimens for testing.

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will continue to step up inspections at catering premises across the territory and conduct joint operations with the Police if necessary, to ensure that catering business operators and the public strictly comply with relevant regulations. Enforcement actions will be taken against offenders so as to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in food premises.

If catering business operators contravene the Regulation, they are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who violate the group gathering restriction of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition in Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) are subject to a fixed penalty of \$2,000.

The spokesman 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.

