

FEHD steps up inspections at food premises (with photos)

With the Lunar New Year approaching, the Centre for Food Safety and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) have jointly stepped up inspections of food premises to protect food safety during the festive season.

A spokesman for the FEHD said today (January 20), "As we enter a peak period of dining with families and friends during the Lunar New Year, the FEHD has stepped up inspections of food premises. Special attention is being paid to food storage, preparation and hygiene to ensure compliance with safety standards and relevant legislation. In the event of any breaches of food safety or health requirements, the FEHD will take stringent follow-up action. We have also strengthened communication with the trade to remind food premises to adhere to Good Hygiene Practices and to promote food safety awareness."

The spokesman said the inspections cover the key aspects of food storage and preparation, including checking the compliance of food storage temperature to ensure that cold food is kept at or below 4 degrees Celsius while hot food is kept at or above 60 degrees C. Moreover, the inspections also aim to check if raw and cooked foods are separately stored and handled to prevent cross-contamination, and to ensure food handlers maintain personal hygiene such as thorough hand washing before and after handling food to reduce the risk of food contamination.

Over the past week, the FEHD inspected some 4 500 food premises across the territory, carried out immediate rectifications, issued warnings and health advices, and initiated nine prosecutions in total on aspects relevant to food storage, preparation and hygiene. The operations are ongoing.

The FEHD appeals to food businesses to follow Good Hygiene Practices and make reference to the following advice when preparing food:

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food, and keep hands and utensils clean. Handwashing facilities should be equipped with adequate supply of liquid soap;
- Store and handle raw and cooked foods separately to prevent cross-contamination;
- Cook food thoroughly until the core temperature reaches at least 75 degrees C, and keep the cooked food at above 60 degrees C if not consumed immediately;
- Pre-cooked food subjected to cold storage should be cooled from 60 degrees C to 20 degrees C within two hours, and from 20 degrees C to 4 degrees C inside a chiller within the next four hours;
- Food handlers should report to their supervisor immediately and refrain from working if they feel sick;
- When handling vomitus, wear gloves and apply 1:49 diluted household

bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water) to clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items thoroughly. Wash hands thoroughly afterwards; and

- Provide food handlers with regular training on food safety, environment and personal hygiene.

