

FEHD takes stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations over past long weekend

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (May 10) that the FEHD continued to step up its inspections territory-wide and conducted joint operations with the Police in a number of districts, so as to take enforcement actions against operators, staff and customers of catering businesses and other premises in defiance of the anti-epidemic regulations. The spokesman again reminded parties concerned to remain vigilant and 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), the Prevention and Control of Disease (Vaccine Pass) Regulation (Cap. 599L) etc. The FEHD will continue to conduct enforcement operations proactively, and urges premises operators not to defy the law.

The FEHD and the Police in the past three days (May 7 to 9) inspected a total of 186 catering premises and five other premises during the joint operations, and the FEHD on its own inspected a total of 1 262 catering premises and 349 other premises. Over the past three days, the FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against operators of 28 catering premises suspected of breaching the requirements under the directions.

The FEHD also required the premises to take corresponding measures for reducing the risk of transmission. Premises found with irregularities had to, on the subsequent day of being identified of the irregularities by the enforcement officers, cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day, and allow no more than two persons to be seated together at one table for a period of three, seven or 14 days. In addition, the FEHD also issued fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to three customers suspected of breaching the requirement of scanning the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code and one staff suspected of breaching the Vaccine Pass requirement.

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business contravenes the Regulation or the requirements and directions of the Vaccine Pass, he or she is liable to be prosecuted and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who are present at catering premises or other specified premises must comply with directions applicable to them. Non-compliance with the relevant directions is an offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000. The liability may be discharged by paying a fixed penalty of \$5,000. In addition, for customers in breach of the requirement on the maximum number of persons per table within catering premises, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). For customers not wearing a mask when they are not eating or drinking at a table therein, or they are not eating or drinking, they are

liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I).

In addition, the FEHD conducted joint operations with several government departments over the last long weekend at public places where people including domestic helpers congregate during weekends and public holidays to carry out publicity and educational work, appealing to them to raise awareness of epidemic prevention and comply with the various anti-epidemic regulations and restrictions.

The FEHD, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force, the Labour Department, relevant District Offices and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, conducted joint operations at various public places near popular domestic helper gathering places during weekend and public holidays. Apart from arranging for cleaning service contractors to strengthen the street cleaning services at the relevant spots, the FEHD also stepped up patrols to combat unlicensed hawking activities. During the operation, a total of 21 FPNs were issued to persons who breached public cleanliness offences and 14 seizures of hawker abandoned articles were effected. Domestic helpers have also been reminded by other government departments to comply with the regulations on mask wearing and the prohibition of gatherings in public places.

To minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, the spokesman strongly appealed to all sectors of the community to stay vigilant and comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner. The FEHD will continue to strengthen its publicity efforts and enforcement actions. All sectors are reminded to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together.