

FEHD urges public to avoid grave-sweeping activities during long holidays

With the approach of the Birthday of the Buddha and Labour Day holidays, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (April 28) appealed to members of the public to avoid grave sweeping during the long holidays as far as possible. Doing so can lessen crowd conditions and reduce close contact, thereby consolidating the recent progress made in reducing the risk of spreading the virus through social contact.

An FEHD spokesman said, "Although the number of new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hong Kong has subsided these days, given that the pandemic remains severe in some overseas countries, the community must stay vigilant to safeguard against any sudden turn in the epidemic situation in Hong Kong. Members of the public should co-operate and work together to fight the virus. They should seriously consider postponing grave-sweeping activities so as to prevent and protect themselves and their family members from infection, thereby preventing the spread of the virus in the community."

The FEHD reminded grave sweepers to avoid group gatherings when grave sweeping, maintain an appropriate social distance with others at all times and avoid meal gatherings with relatives and friends at worship sites.

The spokesman said, "The Government has extended the measures under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) to May 7. The regulation prohibits group gatherings with more than four people in public places and grave sweeping is not exempted. Therefore, members of the public have to abide by the group gathering regulation by having not more than four people together during grave sweeping unless they are living in the same household. In addition, a distance of at least 1.5 metres should be maintained between grave sweeper groups."

For members of the public visiting cemeteries and columbaria to pay respects to ancestors, the spokesman reminded that they should seek medical advice promptly and refrain from grave sweeping if they have fever or respiratory symptoms. Grave sweepers should maintain good personal hygiene, wear surgical masks and always keep their hands clean. They are also reminded to keep flammable items (e.g. alcohol antiseptic sprays and alcohol-based hand sanitisers) away from ignition sources, incense and candles, and furnaces for the sake of safety.

The FEHD appeals to members of the public to make use of the Internet Memorial Service webpage (www.memorial.gov.hk) or its mobile application anywhere and anytime to pay tribute to deceased loved ones.