

Government allows catering businesses to resume daytime dine-in services from tomorrow

A Government spokesman today (July 30) said that, after reviewing the implementation of cessation of dine-in services for the entire day for catering businesses yesterday (July 29), the Government has decided to allow the resumption of daytime dine-in services from 5am to 5.59pm with effect from tomorrow (July 31), having noted the inconvenience and difficulties previously brought about for the public not working from home.

In view of the severe epidemic situation and the higher infection risks involved in eating without wearing a mask, it is necessary to impose more stringent epidemic prevention measures for the dine-in arrangement in catering business premises as below:

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(1) The number of customers at any catering premises at any one time must not exceed 50% of the normal seating capacity of the premises. No more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises;

(2) Tables available for use or being used by customers within any catering premises must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or a partition which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table at the premises;

(3) Any premises (commonly known as a bar or a pub) that is exclusively or mainly used for the sale or supply of intoxicating liquor as defined in section 53(1) of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109) for consumption in that premises must be closed. Any part of a catering premises that is exclusively or mainly used for the sale or supply of such intoxicating liquor for consumption in that part must be closed; and

(4) Live performance and dancing must not be allowed in any catering premises. All karaoke and mahjong-tin kau activity carried on at any catering premises must be suspended. Other requirements and restrictions in relation to catering business premises would remain in effect, including wearing a mask at all times within any catering premises except when the person is consuming food or drink; conducting body temperature screening for all persons entering the premises; and providing hand sanitisers.

For the daily period from 6pm to 4.59am the next day, except for specific premises, a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business, and close any premises, or part of the premises, on which food or drink is sold or supplied by the business for consumption on the premises. The premises concerned may still sell or

supply food and/or drink for takeaway services and delivery during this period.

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The Government calls on the persons responsible for carrying on catering business to strictly abide by the above measures and to take further measures, such as arranging single-sided seats as far as practicable to avoid face-to-face contact and not to make table-sharing arrangements to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus.

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The Secretary for Food and Health will publish in the Gazette later today the latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) regarding the above arrangements for the directions to take effect from tomorrow to August 4.

The spokesman reiterated that implementation of the temporary cessation of dine-in services was intended to curb the continued spread of the disease in the community by further minimising eating in groups and social contact in view of the severe epidemic situation.

The Government again strongly urges all employers to allow their employees to work from home as far as possible, thereby reducing the chance of infection when large groups of employees eat out during breakfast and lunch. Where possible, employers may implement flexible lunch hours or other measures to reduce the chances of employees going out and increasing contact among them.

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The spokesman also appealed to the public to continue to maintain social distance with other people and to avoid unnecessary gatherings in order to limit or cut the virus transmission chain in the community. This is to protect public health in Hong Kong on the whole and that of individuals, thereby easing the enormous pressure currently put on the public healthcare system.