

Labour Department reminds foreign domestic helpers to comply with social distancing measures

The Labour Department (LD) today (February 11) again reminded foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to comply with social distancing measures announced by the Government.

An LD spokesman said, "According to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I), a person who participates in a prohibited group gathering of more than two persons in public places or fails to wear a mask in accordance with the requirement may be charged a fixed penalty of \$5,000. During the Chinese New Year holidays (from February 12 to February 15), the LD will, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Home Affairs Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, conduct mobile broadcasts in multiple languages and joint operations for four consecutive days at popular FDH gathering places across the territory to call upon FDHs to comply with the relevant requirements. Relevant departments will take enforcement action against those who still refuse to abide by the regulations after repeated reminders. LD officers have been appointed by the Director of Health as authorised officers to assist in enforcing the above-mentioned two regulations.

"We remind FDHs to strictly observe the requirements and appeal to them to avoid gatherings (including in boarding facilities), food sharing and other social activities on their rest days and stay at home for rest as far as possible to safeguard their personal health. We also encourage employers and FDHs to discuss rest day arrangements, so as to minimise the health risk of participating in social activities."

At the same time, employers are reminded that they must not compel their FDHs to work on a rest day. An employer who compels his or her FDH to work on a rest day without the agreement of the FDH or fails to grant rest days to the FDH is in breach of the Employment Ordinance and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000.

Should FDHs and their employers have any enquiries on employment matters, they may contact the LD through the dedicated FDH hotline at 2157 9537 (manned by 1823), by email to fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk or through the online form on the dedicated portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk).