

Labour Department reminds foreign domestic helpers to comply with social distancing measures and appeals to them to get vaccinated

The Labour Department (LD) today (June 14) said that joint operations were conducted yesterday (June 13) and today (June 14), in collaboration with the Hong Kong Police Force, the Home Affairs Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, in popular gathering places of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to call upon them to comply with the anti-epidemic regulations on mask-wearing and prohibition of group gatherings of more than four persons in public places.

Government departments conducted joint operations at popular FDH gathering places (including Tamar Park in Admiralty, Victoria Park in Causeway Bay, Central and Lai Chi Kok Park) for two consecutive days. The LD arranged publicity vans to park in the above-mentioned districts to broadcast reminders in Chinese, English and major FDH languages (including Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai) to call upon FDHs to comply with the regulations on mask-wearing and prohibition of group gatherings of more than four persons in public places. During the joint operations, multilingual promotional leaflets were distributed by officers from the departments concerned to FDHs.

A Government 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 four persons in public places or fails to wear a mask in accordance with the requirement may be charged a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The Government will continue to conduct publicity to FDHs and remind them to strictly observe the relevant regulations, and 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."

During the same period, the LD has also conducted inspections in the above-mentioned places to check FDHs' compliance with the compulsory testing notice issued on May 12. As at 3pm today (June 14), LD officers conducted spot checks on a total of 2 268 FDHs and the vast majority had complied with the compulsory testing notice. The Government sincerely thanks the FDHs for their understanding and co-operation. LD officers issued compulsory testing orders to 20 FDHs who had not complied with the compulsory testing notice, requiring them to undergo testing within a specified time frame. There were 46 FDHs whose testing/vaccination records required further verification, and the LD will follow up accordingly.

Any person who fails to comply with a compulsory testing notice commits

an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

In view of the threat posed by the mutant strain, the Government again appeals to all FDHs to get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect their own health and the health of their employers' families and others.