

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

The Labour Department (LD) today (December 26) again reminded foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to comply with social distancing measures announced by the Government.

An LD spokesman said, "The Government had amended the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) to prohibit group gatherings of more than two persons in public places. A person who participates in a prohibited group gathering may be charged a fixed penalty, the amount of which has been raised to \$5,000. At the same time, the fixed penalty charged against a person who fails to wear a mask in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) has also been raised to \$5,000. The Government will conduct mobile broadcast in multiple languages and joint operations at popular FDH gathering places tomorrow (December 27) across the territory to call upon FDHs to comply with the relevant requirements."

"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/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 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).