

Latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation

Since the situation in Hong Kong has stabilised in terms of the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the recent weeks, and no new local cases have been detected after enhanced testing in the community, the Government will relax social distancing measures in accordance with the "suppress and lift" strategy.

The Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) will issue the latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap. 599F) through notices published in the Gazette today (May 26) to –

1. allow bathhouses, party rooms, clubs or nightclubs and karaoke establishments to resume operation;
2. allow karaoke activities carried on in catering premises, party rooms and club-houses provided that the applicable directions in respect of karaoke establishments are complied with;
3. allow any part(s) of the club-house being used or operated as a party room to resume operation provided that the applicable directions in respect of party rooms are complied with; and
4. maintain other measures regulating catering businesses and scheduled premises.

The latest directions (summary at Annex) will come into effect at 0.00am on May 29, 2020 for a period of seven days.

A spokesperson added, "The above measures have balanced the oft-competing factors of public health protection, economic impact and social acceptance. They would help maintain social distancing while allowing room for gradual resumption of social activities."

"The Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation and review the various measures in place from time to time with a view to suitably adjusting them taking into account all relevant factors."

Persons responsible for carrying on catering businesses and the managers of scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under the

Regulation would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Separately, any person who participates in a prohibited group gathering; organises a prohibited group gathering; owns, controls or operates the place of such gathering; and knowingly allows the taking place of such gathering, commits an offence under Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. Persons who participate in a prohibited group gathering may discharge liability for the offence by paying a fixed penalty of \$2,000.