

Public should properly maintain social distancing at all times

The Government today (March 30) appeals the public to properly maintain social distancing at all times and support the temporary measures implemented by the Government with a view to addressing the current situation of public health emergency and working together to fight the disease.

With the view of delaying the spread of COVID-19 in Hong Kong, the Government has put in place the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G).

Under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), two directions in relation to operations of catering business and scheduled premises have commenced at 6pm on March 28 for 14 days.

As at 0.00am today, the staff of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) inspected a total of 3 200 catering business premises (among them, more than five establishments are holding karaoke establishment permits) with a total of about 280 reminders (of advisory nature including immediate rectification) offered. The reminders were mainly related to not conducting body temperature screening on customers before entering the catering business premises and buffer between one table and another table not yet in compliance with the requirements. Moreover, some 100 inspections to cooked food and light refreshment hawker stalls, some 1 500 inspections to cooked food and light refreshment market stalls were conducted with a total of about 110 reminders (of advisory nature) were offered. The FEHD has also put in place appropriate arrangement relating to the layout and furniture of the communal seating areas in its public markets such that they are in compliance with the relevant requirements of the directions relating to catering business.

The Police has inspected 22 premises in bar area, and also conducted joint inspection with the FEHD to inspect 19 premises in bar area. No violation of the relevant direction was observed. Meanwhile, the Police handled 278 reports on non-compliance of the relevant directions and gave 55 verbal warnings.

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office of the Department of Health has inspected 22 premises in bar area. Verbal advice was given to six premises failing to wholly complied with the relevant requirements.

The staff of the FEHD inspected about 130 scheduled premises under its purview (about 110 places of public entertainment including cinemas and temporary places of public entertainment as well as more than 20 bathhouses).

All premises comply with the requirements. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department inspected a total of 49 licensed billboard entertainments, a total of five licensed public bowling alleys and a total of five public skating rinks. Violation of the relevant requirements was not found.

The Home Affairs Department staff also inspected 295 clubhouses and 100 amusement games centres without observing any violation. Moreover, the Lands Department carried out an inspection at an industrial building, but the unit concerned was not found contravening the Regulation in the operation.

In addition, in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G), the Government prohibits group gatherings with more than four people in public places with effect from 0.00am yesterday (March 29) for 14 days.

Since implementation of the Regulation, the Police has stepped up patrols in various districts to remind the public to comply with the requirements of the Regulation by verbal explanation, advice or warning. As at 0.00am today, the Police handled 188 reports on non-compliance of the relevant directions and gave 24 warnings.

The Government strongly urges members of the public to be self-disciplined and abide by the law. For the sake of themselves as well as other people, they should go out less, avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings as well as properly maintain social distancing as far as possible, with an aim to cutting the virus transmission chain.