

Publicity efforts to encourage foreign domestic helpers and employers to fight COVID-19 together

The Labour Department (LD) announced today (April 4) that mobile broadcasts will be conducted tomorrow (April 5) in popular gathering places of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to call upon them to comply with the regulation on the prohibition of group gatherings in public places.

Publicity vans will park at popular FDH gathering places on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories to broadcast reminders in Chinese, English and major FDH languages (including Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai) on the regulation of the prohibition of group gatherings in public places. Leaflets in the same languages will be distributed to FDHs during the broadcast to appeal to them to comply with the regulation.

With effect from March 29 to April 11, group gatherings with more than four people in public places are prohibited and offenders are liable to a fixed penalty of \$2,000, or if charged in a court, a maximum penalty of a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the department said, "The mobile broadcasts will form part of the wide range of publicity measures rolled out in the past few days. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, has made a personal appeal in a video message (isd.wecast.hk/vod/?id=10476). We appreciate the contribution of FDHs to Hong Kong society and understand that they would like to go out and meet friends during their rest days. However, it is essential that all of us practise social distancing to prevent the spread of epidemic. We appeal again to FDHs and their employers to exercise mutual understanding on rest day arrangements, including staying home for the rest or taking the rest day on weekdays instead of at the weekend."

Employers are reminded that compelling an FDH to work on a rest day without the agreement of the FDH or failing to grant rest days to the FDH is in violation of the Employment Ordinance. The employer concerned is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000.

A wide range of publicity measures were rolled out to convey the above messages to FDHs and their employers. These include joining efforts with consulates-general to promote the relevant messages to their nationals through their websites and social media platforms, distributing (also via electronic means) and posting leaflets and posters in major FDH languages in public and private housing estates across the territory, broadcasting appeal messages in radio programmes targetting FDHs, promoting on the Government's social media platforms, and screening publicity messages at enquiry centres of the Home Affairs Department.

Furthermore, some frequently asked questions and answers on rest day arrangements and relevant employment matters are available on the dedicated FDH portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk) of the LD for employers' reference.

"We hope that the above publicity efforts would further help disseminate the messages to FDHs and employers and provide practical information to them. We appeal to their continued support in fighting the virus," the spokesman added.

For any update and health information on COVID-19, please visit the Government's COVID-19 Thematic Website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng). Information in Chinese, English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Sinhala, Bengali, Nepali and Urdu is available.

Should FDHs and their employers have enquiries on employment matters, they may seek the LD's assistance through its dedicated email account for FDH matters (fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk) and the online form on its dedicated FDH portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk).