

Working Group invites suppliers to provide information on air purifiers meeting specified specifications applicable to catering business

The Secretary for Food and Health yesterday (March 17) stipulated a requirement on air change or air purifiers to be complied with in dine-in restaurants in the directions in relation to catering business under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). The Working Group, established for the smooth implementation of the requirement, held its first meeting today (March 18) to discuss the future work plan. It invited device suppliers to provide information on their air purifiers that meet the specified specifications. This will help catering premises operators and ventilation contractors in complying with the requirement to register on or before April 30.

The Chairman of the Working Group, Professor Yuen Pak-leung, said, "With members' extensive professional expertise and experience, I hope that the Working Group will put forward practicable recommendations to the Government, with a view to assisting in the smooth compliance of the requirement by catering premises operators and ventilation contractors, so as to protect the health of staff, customers and the public, and to fortify the public's confidence in patronising catering premises."

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said that at today's meeting, members of the Working Group exchanged professional views on air changes and air purifiers, and discussed in detail the upcoming work. One of the important tasks of the Working Group is to allow, in an open, transparent, fair and impartial manner, suppliers of air purifiers that meet the specified specifications to provide information within a reasonable time, so that the Working Group could consolidate the information for reference by catering premises operators and ventilation contractors.

The Working Group invites suppliers (including manufacturers, authorised agents, online shopping websites or physical retail shops) who are interested to provide information on their air purifiers that meet the specified specifications before 5pm on March 28. They are also required to submit information on the models and respective manuals of the air purifiers, as well as filling in the information sought in specified form on the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/forms/air_purifier_restaurant.html), to the Secretariat of the Working Group by mail (45/F, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong) or email (wg-ventilation@feh.gov.hk).

The Working Group will consolidate the information provided by the suppliers as soon as possible and will announce details about air purifiers meeting relevant specifications in early April or before for reference by

catering premises operators and ventilation contractors.

In addition, the Working Group will arrange meetings with representatives of the catering trade and ventilation contractor businesses as soon as practicable to listen to their views and respond to their queries, and will formulate specific guidelines on matters related to air change or air purifiers at an appropriate time.

According to the latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health on ventilation requirements, the air change per hour at seating areas of dine-in catering premises must reach six. If unable to do so, the premises may install air purifiers that meet the specified specifications in the seating area according to the on-the-ground situation (including the site condition) and the manufacturer manual as an alternative. The Government listed in the Gazette three types of air purifiers, namely high-efficiency particulate arrestance filter (HEPA) cum ultraviolet-C (UV-C) devices, HEPA devices and UV-C devices as choices. Catering premises must comply with the specified requirement on air change or air purifiers on or before April 30, as well as to register on the FEHD's website and display a notice at the entrance of the premises.