

## Working Group on air change or air purifiers in catering premises inspects restaurant with cluster of infection cases (with photos/video)

The Secretary for Food and Health stipulated in March last year a requirement on air change or air purifiers to be complied with by dine-in catering premises 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, together with representatives of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, inspected yesterday evening (May 23) a Sheung Wan restaurant where a cluster of infection cases had previously emerged, so as to acquire an understanding of the improvement works the restaurant has made in relation to its ventilation systems after the event.

During the inspection, the operator of the restaurant told the Working Group that the restaurant had hitherto suspended its business operation upon receipt of the Centre of Health Protection's notification. Apart from cleaning and disinfection for different areas of the premises by the restaurant, a series of repair works had also been carried out by its ventilation contractors for the ventilation system of the premises to improve the ventilation situation and reduce the risk of virus transmission.

The Chairman of the Working Group, Professor Yuen Pak-leung, said, "The Working Group strongly appeals to catering premises operators to proactively check the ventilation systems of their restaurants, to ensure their proper operation, sufficient fresh air supply and even coverage of all areas. If necessary, they should seek assistance from professionals, such as a registered specialist contractor (ventilation works category) (ventilation contractor). With further relaxation in social distancing measures under the forthcoming third stage approaching, the customers of the restaurants will progressively increase, and ensuring sound air change and air purifier measures have become all the more important."

He continued, "The Working Group would like to take this opportunity to remind catering premises operators again to properly maintain and repair the fresh air supply systems approved under the restaurant licences, and to switch on and operate the systems when the premises are open for business, so that the supply of outside air functions normally. This serves to comply with the requirement under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) that the licensed premises must be provided with a ventilating system that will provide for each person accommodated in the premises an amount of outside air of not less than 17 cubic metres per hour per person. They are also reminded to observe the air change and/or air purifiers

as registered pursuant to the directions under Cap. 599F. They are required to switch on and operate the ventilation systems and the air purifiers (if installed) when the premises are open for business, and regularly maintain and repair the facilities properly. Even if air purifiers have been installed, the catering premises operators must still switch on and operate their fresh air supply systems at all times."

The FEHD also takes this opportunity to reiterate other requirements and restrictions under the directions of Cap. 599F, including that, while away from their tables, customers must not consume food or drink and must wear a mask.

The Working Group reiterates its calls for the catering sector, other sectors and members of the public to continue to comply with the relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner to protect personal and public health. In addition, as vaccination is a very crucial part of the local anti-epidemic strategy, the Working Group also encourages the public who have not yet received vaccination to get vaccinated as early as possible for better protection of their own health as well as that of the public.

