

## **FEHD steps up inspections and joins interdepartmental joint operations around Christmas to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations**

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has stepped up inspections and joined the joint operations with the Police and relevant departments during the Christmas period, to take stringent enforcement actions relating to anti-epidemic regulations in all districts across the territory. Joint operations were conducted by the FEHD and the Police in Central & Western, Wan Chai, Yau Tsim, Mong Kok and Kwai Tsing District yesterday (December 24), and as circumstances required, the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office of the Department of Health, the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department also joined the joint operations in Wan Chai and Yau Tsim. Together with the inspections conducted by the FEHD, the coverage of the enforcement actions covered all administrative districts across the territory. The Government reminds catering business and scheduled premises operators to strictly comply with the requirements and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (the Regulation), and customers patronising catering premises to comply with the various anti-epidemic regulations and restrictions, including the requirements on group gatherings and wearing of masks.

A total of 108 catering premises and 4 other premises were inspected during the joint operations, and 593 catering premises and 13 other premises were inspected by the FEHD on its own yesterday. The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against 8 persons (7 catering business operators for breaching the requirements on distance or partitions between tables, mask-wearing, etc. and 1 scheduled premises operator for breaching the requirement on closure of places of public entertainment) under the Regulation. In addition, The FEHD initiated procedures on prosecution against 4 persons (3 persons and 1 person suspected to be violating the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) for operating food businesses without a licence and the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172) for operating a place of public entertainment without a licence respectively), including arresting 2 of the operators involved in food businesses. Furthermore, enforcement actions were taken by other departments during the joint operations.

An FEHD spokesman said, "The latest directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to social distancing measures in catering business and scheduled premises under the Regulation has been extended till January 6, 2021. Catering business operators must strictly comply with a series of requirements and restrictions, which include requirements that a

person responsible for carrying on a catering business must cease selling or supplying food or drink for consumption on the premises of the business from 6pm to 4.59am of the subsequent day; and the number of people participating in a banquet in catering premises is limited to 20; no more than two persons may be seated together at one table within any catering premises, the total number of customers allowed in catering premises must not exceed 50 per cent of the normal seating capacity; no live performance and dancing is allowed; a mask must be worn within the premises except when the person is consuming food or drink at a table therein; tables must be arranged in a way to ensure there is a distance of at least 1.5 metres or some form of partition which could serve as an effective buffer between one table and another table; body temperature screening must be conducted before the person is allowed to enter the catering premises; and hand sanitisers must be provided, etc. In addition, a person responsible for carrying on a catering business must display the poster containing the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code at the entrance of the premises or at a conspicuous location. Relevant scheduled premises operators must strictly comply with the direction on closure of scheduled premises, which include places of public entertainment."

If a person responsible for carrying on a catering business or scheduled premises contravenes the regulations under Cap. 599F, he or she is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

For customers in breach of the requirement on no more than two persons per table within catering premises, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for violating the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G). Moreover, for customers not wearing a mask when they are not eating or drinking at a table therein or they are not eating or drinking, they are liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I).

The spokesman said, "Under section 31(1) of the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), except with a licence granted, no person shall carry on any food businesses like food factories or restaurants etc. Offenders are liable to be prosecuted, and upon conviction to a maximum fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for 6 months, and, for a continuing offence, a fine of \$900 for each day"

The spokesman continued, "Under section 4(1) of the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172), without a licence granted, no person shall keep or use any place of public entertainment. Offenders are liable to be prosecuted, and upon conviction to a maximum fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for 6 months, and, for a continuing offence, a fine of \$2,000 for every day"

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD will continue to step up law enforcement and publicity efforts and will deploy additional manpower to conduct joint operations with the Police in the coming few days. Stringent enforcement actions will be taken against offenders to ensure compliance of

relevant regulations. The FEHD also urged catering business and scheduled premises operators and the public to abide by the law.

The spokesman reminded catering business and scheduled premises operators and the public to exercise self-discipline and co-operate to fight the virus together. He also appealed to operators concerned to comply with relevant regulations on prevention and control of disease in a concerted and persistent manner, with a view to keeping their staff, customers and the public safe. Members of the public also have to comply with the related regulations and directions on group gatherings and mask wearing at catering premises.

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## [Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice to help achieve compulsory testing on mandatory basis and community clearing](#)

â€‹The Sha Tin District Office (STD0), together with the Tin Sum Police Station, the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), the Hong Kong Housing Society (Housing Society) and the relevant departments yesterday (December 24) conducted enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at Ming Yan Lau of Jat Min Chuen in Sha Tin. The operation started at 6am yesterday and lasted until midnight.

During the joint enforcement operation, the relevant departments had checked whether the residents had undergone the COVID-19 tests from December 17 to 21, 2020 as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notice issued by the Government earlier.

We had checked the test records of over 1900 residents during the operation, among them, 76 residents were found to have violated the compulsory testing notice.

Some residents claimed they had undertaken the deep throat saliva tests by taking the specimen collection packs. Having checked against the test records provided by the Department of Health (DH), the STD0 confirmed that about 980 residents had undertaken the deep throat saliva tests with negative test results. The STD0 had sent electronic confirmation messages to or asked Housing Society to inform those residents.

However, around 140 residents' records could not be verified. We are following-up with DH for investigation. The STD0 reiterates that the aim of the Government to issue the compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community soonest possible so as to protect the overall

public health and safety. This will also help early identification of hidden cases, so that they can get treatment soonest possible.

We thank the many residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notice for their co-operation to fight against the virus together. During the operation, we had also found a small number of residents who had violated the compulsory testing notice. These residents had been arranged for testing after being warned. We had also requested the residents to stay at home before the testing results are available to reduce the risk of community infection. We understand that the enforcement of the compulsory testing notice could only be successful with the co-operation of the residents and members of the public. The Government appeals again for public co-operation in complying with anti-epidemic measures and maintaining social distancing, so as to enable Hong Kong to return to normal as soon as possible.

We are also grateful for the support and co-operation by the Police, AMS, Housing Society and the related departments to allow the enforcement actions to carry out smoothly. We understand that the enforcement process may cause some inconvenience to the residents. But we hope the residents can understand that this is for the purpose of achieving compulsory testing on mandatory basis and community clearing.

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## [Transport Department's latest service arrangements](#)

To align with the Government's announcement that special work arrangements for government employees will be extended to January 6, 2021, the Transport Department (TD) announced today (December 25) that the special work arrangements at the TD will continue until further notice. The related service arrangements are as follows:

### Licensing and related services

The Licensing Offices at Admiralty, Cheung Sha Wan, Kwun Tong and Sha Tin will maintain the arrangement to suspend walk-in counter services, but will continue to provide counter services for applications submitted by applicants with online appointments and process applications submitted by drop-in boxes, by post, or online (except for the direct issue of a full Hong Kong driving licence).

The TD appeals to members of the public in need to use the online appointment services as far as possible. Those who cannot make a prior booking may submit applications by post or online, or via the drop-in boxes placed at the Licensing Offices from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday. For

applications submitted via the drop-in boxes, applicants are advised to mark on the envelope the vehicle registration marks and the expiry dates of the vehicle licences, and to leave contact telephone numbers on the application forms. This would help the staff to identify and follow up on urgent applications.

It is anticipated that the queuing time for counter services with an appointment will be longer under the special work arrangements. Moreover, the handling of the licensing applications submitted via drop-in box, by post or online involves more steps than applications processed instantly over the counters, and therefore requires longer processing time. It is estimated that the current processing time of two to three weeks may increase to about three to four weeks. The TD appeals for patience and understanding from members of the public who have submitted applications. To avoid unnecessary delays, they should submit applications three to four weeks before the expiry dates as far as practicable.

#### Driving test services

All driving test services (including road tests, the written test (Part A) and the taxi written test) and driving test appointment services will continue to be suspended until further notice. The TD will notify the affected candidates individually of the rescheduled test dates after resumption of the driving test services. During the suspension period of the driving test appointment services, candidates who would like to submit applications for test postponement/temporary cancellation of a driving test appointment or change of driving test region may submit the applications within two weeks after resumption of the driving test appointment services.

#### Vehicle examination services

The TD's Vehicle Examination Centres will continue to provide vehicle examination services for vehicles with an appointment from Monday to Friday. Since the vehicle concerned has to pass the examination before the vehicle licence can be renewed, members of the public should make an early vehicle examination appointment as soon as possible.

The TD will continue to closely monitor the development of the epidemic and adjust its services to align with the Government's anti-epidemic measures and arrangements, and will notify the public in due course.

For enquiries, members of the public can contact the relevant offices at the following numbers:

Hong Kong Licensing Office	2804 2636
Kowloon Licensing Office	2150 7728
Kwun Tong Licensing Office	2775 6835
Sha Tin Licensing Office	2606 1468
Driving Test Appointment Office	2771 7723
To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre	2364 7211/2333 3112
Sheung Kwai Chung Vehicle Examination Centre	2424 5215
Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre	2759 7036

## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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## **Music talent hits the main stage**

The Government is making a vital contribution to the next generation of music talent by supporting a pilot programme designed to help tertiary students develop their musical potential under the mentorship of professional musicians.

News.gov.hk spoke with programme founder Chiu Tsang-hei, tutor Arnold Chan and two programme participants to understand how meticulous guidance has inspired the students to pursue their dreams of becoming successful musicians.

The story is available at [www.news.gov.hk/eng/feature](http://www.news.gov.hk/eng/feature) today (December 25) in text and video format.