

**Forty-first Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 3(b): Report on the work of the Food Business
and Related Services Task Force***

Purpose

This paper reports on the work of the Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF) since the last Business Facilitation Advisory Committee (BFAC) meeting held on 28 August 2019.

Work progress of FRSTF

Relief Measures to Support Food Business

2. The Hong Kong economy faced significant downward pressure. Externally, the global economic outlook is darkened by high uncertainties. Domestically, the social incidents have hit the retail trade, restaurants and tourism, adding a further blow to an already-weak economy. To counter the challenging external and local economic environment, the Financial Secretary announced on 15 August 2019 a package of measures to support enterprises, especially small and medium enterprises, to safeguard jobs and relieve people's financial burden. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and Drainage Services Department briefed FRSTF the support measures in relation to food business, including the waiver of licence fees and trade effluent surcharge in the meeting on 19 November 2019.

3. FRSTF thanked the departments' briefing and welcomed the relief measures.

***Relaxation of Licensing Requirements and Provision of New Checklists
Stipulating Fire Safety Compliance Inspection***

4. Under the prevailing food business licensing regime, it is required to install an independent chimney on external wall of the building if a restaurant uses solid fuel or diesel for cooking. From food safety point of view, cashier activity should not be allowed within food preparation area.

5. Having discussed with the relevant departments, FEHD has relaxed the relevant standard licensing requirements. If the consumption of the said fuel in a restaurant business does not exceed certain level, the applicant is not required to provide independent chimney for the premises on the external wall of the building. Moreover, if the applicant can fulfil specified hygiene conditions, cashier activity may be allowed within food preparation area. The two revised licensing requirements have been effective since June and November 2019 respectively.

6. In addition, Fire Services Department (FSD) would devise a set of checklists to stipulate the items to be examined and the compliance standards in inspections. This would facilitate the applicants in monitoring the work of their contractors effectively and hence meeting the FSD's requirements. The measure would be launched in Q1 2020 tentatively.

7. FRSTF welcomed the new business facilitation measures and appreciated the departments' efforts in reducing trade's administrative burden in complying with licensing requirements.

Adoption of "Self Certification System" - Self Certification by Authorised Person in Revised/Alteration Plans

8. Under the Food Business Regulation, food business licensees are required to seek approval from the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene before carrying out any alteration or addition to their licensed premises which would result in material deviation from the layout plans of the premises approved by the Government. To expedite the processing of applications for alteration to the layout plans of food premises so that the operators can carry out the alteration as soon as possible to cater for their business operations, Buildings Department (BD) and Independent Checking Unit (ICU) under the Transport and Housing Bureau briefed the members on the Self Certification System by Authorised Person (AP) implemented in December 2019.

9. Provided that the proposed revisions and the premises can meet certain criteria, the applicants can opt for the submission of AP's certification to certify that the proposed changes shown in the revised layout plan are in compliance with the issued building safety requirements. Upon receipt of the AP's certification under the Self Certification System, FEHD will handle the applications without referral to BD/ICU.

10. FRSTF welcome the new Self Certification System and appreciated the departments' efforts in addressing the trade's concern and business facilitation.

Way forward

11. Members are invited to note the work progress of FRSTF. FRSTF will continue to monitor the development of the above issues.

**Business Facilitation Team
Efficiency Office
Innovation and Technology Bureau
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