

**Business Facilitation Advisory Committee
Food Business and Related Services Task Force**

**Proposed Business Facilitation Measures
under the Food Business Licensing Regime of FEHD**

Purpose

This paper aims at briefing members on the business facilitation measures to be implemented by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to facilitate food business operations.

Introducing a "Composite Permit" Covering Multiple Restricted Food Items

2. The Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) stipulates that any person who would like to sell the restricted food items specified in Schedule 2 to the Regulation (such as non-bottled drinks, Chinese herb tea, ice-cream in original wrappers, etc) is required to obtain a written permission issued by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene ("permit" hereunder) to ensure maintenance of a good standard of hygiene at the premises concerned and the wholesomeness of the food supplied therefrom. If more than one kind of restricted food items are to be sold, whether or not at the same premises or through an online platform, the applicant is required to submit separate applications. Upon review, the FEHD considers that as most operators selling restricted food are required to comply with similar basic licensing requirements and conditions, such as the provision of washing, disinfection and storage facilities on the premises, supply of mains water with recognised sources, etc, there is room for merging the application processes.

3. With a view to facilitating the trade to sell multiple restricted food items, it is proposed to introduce a "composite permit" so that the food business operators will only need to apply for one "composite permit" to sell a variety of restricted food at the premises/online platform, thus making the application process more user-friendly. As food sold by means of a vending machine involves different licensing requirements and

conditions than other restricted food items, and the application process also involves more work, a “composite permit” will not cover food sold by means of a vending machine. The existing arrangements for the “permits” will remain unchanged. Applicants may choose to apply for a “permit” or a “composite permit” according to their needs.

Reducing the Reminders Issued for Compliance with Licensing Requirements by Letter or Email

4. At present, the FEHD issues reminder letters to alert the applicants to comply with the licensing requirements so as to obtain a full licence in a timely manner. Taking restaurant licence as an example, the FEHD will issue reminder letters in the first, fourth, seventh and ninth months after the provisional license is issued. In the light of the FEHD’s enhancement of the licensing regime in which the deadline for compliance with the licensing requirements for a full food business licence has been revised from six months to three months after the expiry of the provisional licence, the FEHD proposes reducing the number of reminder letters to be issued, i.e. reminder letters will only be issued in the first and fourth months after the issue of the provisional licence.

New Licence Fee Payment Arrangement for Temporary Food Factory Licence

5. Under the current licensing policy, upon the approval of a Temporary Food Factory Licence by the FEHD, an applicant will be notified to pay the licence fee and obtain the relevant licence. However, in view of the relatively short processing time for a Temporary Food Factory Licence and the commencement date of the licence is usually immediately after its approval date, the FEHD notices that some applicants commence business only with an approval letter and without a Temporary Food Factory Licence.

6. In order to streamline the application process and shorten the time for applicants to obtain a licence, the FEHD will enhance the arrangements for payment of licence fees. Applicants will be required to pay the licence fee when submitting the application. The FEHD will process the application upon payment confirmation. When the licence application is subsequently approved, the FEHD will issue a notification letter together with the licence to the applicant.

Extending Licence Validity Period

7. According to the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), all full food business licences are valid for 12 months. To facilitate business operations, the FEHD is studying the feasibility of extending the maximum validity period to two years, which is applicable to new issue and renewal of food business licences.

8. Moreover, pursuant to section 125 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), if the FEHD has to impose licensing conditions upon licence renewal, it is required to notify the licensee of the amendments in writing 90 days before licence expiry. The FEHD will study amending the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance together with the Food Business Regulation to shorten the notice period required for changes to licensing conditions.

Advice Sought

9. Members are invited to note and give comments on the contents of this paper.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
April 2024