

## **Frequently Asked Questions - Revision of demerit points for food hygiene offences under the Points Demerit System (PDS)**

### **1. Which categories of premises are affected by this PDS revision?**

All food retail establishments subjected to the PDS will be affected by this PDS revision. This includes main operators of food courts, coffee shops and canteens, individual stall licensee of the stalls in coffee shops, food courts and canteens, licensees of all other eating establishments such as restaurants, snack bars, food caterers, food shop take-away, entertainment outlets and also hawker stalls.

### **2. What are the changes to the Point Demerit System?**

With effect from 1 Apr 2014, demerit points for food hygiene offences will be revised. The objective of the review is to establish the risk of the hygiene offences and its impact on food safety. Offences which are assessed to be of high risk and impact on food safety are accorded more demerit points, whereas offences which are assessed to be of lower risk or are administrative in nature are accorded lower or no demerit point. Please refer to Annex A for the list of offences which will be affected by the review of demerit points.

### **3. Is there any change to the composition fine amount of food hygiene offences?**

In the revised PDS, there will no longer be offences with 2 demerit points. Hygiene offences will be classified into minor, major or serious offences. The composition fines are as follows:

| <b>Severity of Offence</b> | <b>Demerit Point</b> | <b>Composition Fine</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Minor Offence              | 0 points             | \$200                   |
| Major Offence              | 4 points             | \$300                   |
| Serious Offence            | 6 points             | \$400                   |

With effect from 1 April 2020, higher penalties will be imposed on lapses detected in the toilet, with the composition fines up to \$500.

### **4. Is there any change to the suspension period?**

There is no change to the suspension period for food establishments (PDS-12). For individual stall licensee of the stalls in any coffee shops, food courts and canteens, as well as licensees of all other eating establishments such as restaurants, snack bars, food caterers, food shop take-away, entertainment outlets and also hawker stalls, the suspension period is as follows:

| <b>Accumulated Demerit Points</b>                           | <b>Suspension Period</b>   |                 |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 12 points within 12 months                                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Suspension | 2 Weeks         |
| 12 points within 12 months after 1 <sup>st</sup> suspension | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Suspension | 4 Weeks         |
| 12 points within 12 months after 2 <sup>nd</sup> suspension | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Suspension | Licence revoked |

The suspension period of main operators of coffee shops, food courts and canteens will also remain unchanged as follows:

| <b>Accumulated Demerit Points</b>                           | <b>Suspension Period</b>   |        |
|---|----------------------------|--------|
| 12 points within 12 months                                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Suspension | 1 Day  |
| 12 points within 12 months after 1 <sup>st</sup> suspension | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Suspension | 2 Days |
| 12 points within 12 months after 2 <sup>nd</sup> suspension | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Suspension | 3 Days |

**5. Will the accumulated demerit points still be erased at the end of 12 months?**

All accumulated demerit points by the operators will be erased if no additional demerit point is recorded against the operator for a period of 12 months. This 12-month period starts from the date of the last offence committed and does not coincide with the calendar year.

**6. Why is there a need to revise the current PDS?**

This review is to establish the risk of the hygiene offences and its impact on food safety. Offences which are assessed to be of high risk and impact on food safety are accorded more demerit points, whereas offences which are assessed to be of lower risk or are administrative in nature are accorded lower or no demerit point.

**7. How would the licensee be informed of the demerit points accumulated?**

The licensee will be notified of the offence and the demerit points accumulated via letter upon payment of composition fines or conviction by the court.