


19,000 tickets issued last year for smoking at prohibited areas: NEA

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SINGAPORE: About 19,000 tickets were issued last year to offenders caught smoking at prohibited areas, and of this number, more than 2,600 were for smoking in food establishments, Senior Minister of State for the Environment and Water Resources Amy Khor said on Tuesday (Oct 3).

Replying to a parliamentary question filed by Jalan Besar GRC Member of Parliament (MP) Denise Phua, Dr Khor said her ministry's long-term goal is to prohibit smoking in all public places, except at designated areas.

"This is to protect non-smokers from the harmful health effects of second-hand tobacco smoke," she said.

But she pointed out that as smoking is prohibited at more than 32,000 places, it is not possible for the National Environment Agency (NEA) to watch over every location, or respond immediately to every report of smoking in a prohibited place before the smokers finish their cigarettes.

Therefore, operators and managers of smoke-free premises have a legal duty to stop patrons from smoking, or request patrons to leave if they refuse to stop smoking, she said.

"In cases where they do not stop smoking or leave the premises, the operator or manager of the premises can seek assistance from NEA," she added, noting that NEA took out 400 enforcement actions against operators and managers of premises who "had not fulfilled their duty under the law".

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She urged all smokers to be considerate when smoking in public places, and to smoke only in permitted areas, "so as not to cause disamenity to others".