

Chinese Medicine Development Fund Launched today

The Chinese Medicine Development Fund (CMDF) was rolled out today (June 25) for application by the Chinese medicine trade and relevant organisations.

The Fund provides Chinese medicine practitioners and the Chinese medicine drug sector with financial support to jointly promote the development of Chinese medicine and enhance the overall standard of the industry, including nurturing talent for the Chinese medicine industry and the Chinese medicine hospital, promoting Chinese medicine-related studies and scientific research, and providing assistance to local Chinese medicine traders for improving the quality and standards of production and registration of proprietary Chinese medicines in accordance with statutory requirements. It is also intended to enhance public knowledge and understanding of Chinese medicine.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, noted at the CMDF launch ceremony that the Government announced the establishment of the \$500 million dedicated fund in the Policy Address last year to further promote and boost the development of Chinese medicine. The Fund, consisting of various subsidy programmes, benefits stakeholders at different levels of the Chinese medicine practitioner and Chinese medicine drug sectors in a bid to foster the overall development of the trade.

Members of the Chinese medicine industry have offered valuable advice on the subsidy programmes under the Fund. Having taken into account views from the industry, two programmes, namely the Industry Support Programme and the Enterprise Support Programme, have been set up under the CMDF.

The Industry Support Programme provides funding for non-profit-making organisations, professional bodies, trade and academic associations and research institutions to support training programmes and courses to facilitate the development of Chinese medicine, conduct applied or policy research and studies on Chinese medicine, and organise various Chinese medicine promotional activities. Some programmes under the Industry Support Programme are open for application from today and the closing date for the first batch of applications will be August 9 this year. It is expected that the first batch of approved subsidies will be released in the fourth quarter of this year at the earliest.

The Enterprise Support Programme provides matching funds for individual Chinese medicine practitioners and clinics, members of the Chinese medicine industry and Chinese medicine drug traders, to enhance their professional and manufacturing standards as well as their management quality. Application details will be announced in due course.

Professor Chan expressed her gratitude to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the CMDF, Mr Douglas So, as well as to the members of the

committee and the industry for their valuable advice and recommendations on the management and operation of the Fund. She said she hoped that the CMDF would facilitate development of the local Chinese medicine industry in multiple aspects including nurturing talents in Chinese medicine, encouraging research in Chinese medicine, enhancing public knowledge of Chinese medicine, and creating favourable conditions for promoting Chinese medicine to other places.

The Hong Kong Productivity Council serves as the implementation partner and Secretariat for the CMDF. Further information about the CMDF is available on its website at www.cmdevfund.hk. In addition, a Chinese medicine resources platform has been established under the Fund to consolidate reference materials on Chinese medicine for the trade's reference and to provide a variety of resources to facilitate information exchange and the development of the industry. Details are available on its website at www.cmresource.hk.

[Make prior work arrangements for rainstorms](#)

The Labour Department (LD) today (June 25) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff during and after rainstorms.

"To avoid disputes and confusion, employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures during and after rainstorms," an LD spokesman said.

"In working out and enforcing the arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety both in the workplace and during their journeys to and from work, and adopt a flexible approach. Whenever possible, they should consult their staff."

The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- * Whether employees are required to report for duty when different rainstorm warnings are issued;
- * How wages and allowances will be calculated for staff who are required to report for duty, as well as those who are late for work or absent from work during rainstorms;
- * For employees who are required to travel to and from workplaces during rainstorms, whether transport facilities will be provided for them and, if so, the arrangements; and
- * The time for staff who have not reported for duty to resume work after a rainstorm warning is cancelled, and other relevant arrangements as well as contingency measures.

"Employers should make realistic assessments of the requirements for staff and require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather conditions. If an Amber, Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is issued during working hours, employees working indoors should remain on duty as usual and stay where they are unless it is dangerous to do so. Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should suspend outdoor duties as soon as practicable. They should arrange for their employees to take shelter temporarily and resume duty when weather conditions permit. When the Black Rainstorm Warning is issued, those employees should not resume duty until the warning is lowered and weather conditions permit. If the Black Rainstorm Warning remains in force at the end of working hours, for safety reasons, employers should provide employees with an area in the workplace as temporary shelter for them to stay if they want to.

"If possible, employers should provide transport services for employees who are still required to travel to and from workplaces when the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, or give them a special travelling allowance as encouragement.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work on time upon cancellation of a rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly.

"As rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, employers should not deduct wages of employees who are absent from or late for work because of inclement weather. Neither should employers dismiss an employee summarily based on these grounds," he said.

The spokesman also reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

Employers should not deduct the annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days employees are entitled to under the Employment Ordinance so as to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from employees' failure to report for duty upon the announcement of a Black Rainstorm Warning. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with relevant provisions under the Employment Ordinance is liable to prosecution.

Employers should also note that they have an obligation to maintain a safe workplace for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

"If employees are required to work in times of rainstorms, employers should ensure that the risks at work are properly controlled and reduced to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable," the spokesman said.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for deaths or injury incurred when employees are travelling by a

direct route from their residence to their workplace, or from their workplace back to their residence after work, four hours before or after working hours on a day when Typhoon Signal No. 8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

To provide practical guidelines and samples of work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees, the LD has issued the booklet "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms". The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).

[Hong Kong and Guangdong sign Letter of Intent on Qualifications Framework Co-operation \(with photo\)](#)

The Education Bureau (EDB) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region today (June 25) signed the Letter of Intent on Qualifications Framework (QF) Co-operation between Hong Kong and Guangdong with the Department of Education of Guangdong Province to strengthen collaboration on QF between the two places. The Letter of Intent was signed by the Under Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, and the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Education of Guangdong Province, Mr Xing Feng.

The Letter of Intent covers the co-operation in QF between Hong Kong and Guangdong, the exploration of mutual recognition of credits in different categories of education and training in the Greater Bay Area, and the promotion of talent exchange in the Greater Bay Area. According to the Letter of Intent, Hong Kong and Guangdong will set up a working group to foster comprehensive and effective communication and collaboration between the two places on the co-operation in QF.

At the signing ceremony, Dr Choi said that since the announcement of the intention to develop the country's QF in the National 13th Five-Year Plan in 2016, the EDB has been playing an active role in relevant work. The Bureau has shared its experience in developing and implementing the QF to various organisations and parties on the Mainland on various occasions since the launch of the Hong Kong QF in 2008. The QF Secretariat in Hong Kong also signed a letter of intent with the Guangdong Occupational Skill Testing Authority in 2011 to explore the comparability between competency standards in different industries under the Hong Kong QF and national vocational standards in the Mainland.

Dr Choi said, "The development of the Greater Bay Area provides more co-

operation opportunities in education for Hong Kong and Guangdong. I believe that the Letter of Intent signed today will strengthen collaboration in QF and promote the development of education in the two places, thereby further supporting talent exchange in the Greater Bay Area."

The EDB has been actively establishing networks with overseas QF authorities to enhance the profile of the Hong Kong QF internationally, to ensure that the growth and development of the Hong Kong QF are healthy and commensurate with other economies, and to provide a basis for referencing, alignment and recognition of qualifications by overseas counterparts. The Bureau is also collaborating with the QF authorities of New Zealand, Ireland, Scotland, Thailand and the European Commission to deepen understanding and strengthen Hong Kong's QF relationship with these places.



Public urged to report flooding

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

Members of the public are advised to report any street flooding that comes to their notice to the Drainage Services Department by calling the 24-hour drainage hotline on 2300 1110.

Employers, contractors and employees should be aware of electrical safety at work during rainstorm

As the rainstorm warning has been issued by the Hong Kong Observatory,

the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and contractors that they should adopt necessary work arrangements and take suitable safety measures to protect the safety of their employees when they are carrying out electrical work or handling electrical plant.

A spokesman for the LD said today (June 25) that employers and contractors should avoid assigning employees to carry out electrical work (like electric arc welding work) or handle electrical plant at places affected by rainstorms, and should refer to the "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms" and the "Guide on Safety at Work in times of Inclement Weather" issued by the LD.

Even if electrical work is carried out or electrical plant is handled at places not affected by the rainstorm, suitable safety measures must still be adopted to prevent electric shock as the air would be more humid. Such measures include:

- (i) Ensure that all live parts of an electrical installation are isolated from the power supply source and rendered dead, and the isolation from the power supply source must be maintained as long as electrical work is being carried out;
- (ii) Before carrying out any electrical work or handling any electrical plant, cut off and lock out the power supply source, then test the circuit concerned to confirm it is dead and display suitable warning notices, and issue a work permit thereafter;
- (iii) Ensure that protective devices (such as suitable and adequate fuses and circuit breakers) for the electrical installations or electrical plant have been installed and maintained in good working order, and portable electric tools must be double-insulated or properly earthed;
- (iv) Provide suitable personal protective equipment such as insulating gloves and insulating mats for employees; and
- (v) If live electrical work is unavoidable, a comprehensive risk assessment should be conducted by a competent person and the appropriate safety precautions should be taken to remove or properly control the electrical hazards involved before such work can proceed.

In addition, employees should co-operate with the employer or contractor to follow the safety instructions and use the safety equipment provided.

The LD has published guidebooks and leaflets on electrical work safety. These safety publications are available free from divisional offices of the department or can be downloaded from its website (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_8.htm).

Should there be any questions about occupational safety and health matters, please contact the Occupational Safety Officer of the LD at 2559 2297.