

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 1) 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.

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.

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, regarding an African Swine Fever laboratory test result at the Central Government Offices yesterday evening (May 31):

Reporter: Professor Chan, can you talk about the number of pigs to be culled at the slaughterhouse? Last time, all the pigs were culled and generate strong opposition. This time, you are going to cull all the pigs again. So have you reach a consensus with the traders? Have you come up with other contingency measures in response to other future incidents? For example, are you going to inspect all the pigs waiting to be culled at the slaughterhouse?

Secretary for Food and Health: This time, we will be culling about 4 700 pigs. Actually, since the last incident of African Swine Fever (SWF), we have enhanced our surveillance at the boundary. For example, at the Man Kam To Checkpoint, we actually check all the pigs before coming in. Also, when pig trucks arriving at the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse, our veterinarians will check all the pigs before they go into the slaughterhouse. As you may all know, ASF has an incubation period of four to 19 days, so there is a

possibility that some of the symptoms may not have exhibited even upon checking.

Reporter: Have you reached a consensus with the traders?

Secretary for Food and Health: As I have said earlier, the culling of pigs after we have found a positive sample of SWF is an international practice. We have tried, even last time, to explain to the traders that it is the measure to protect everybody, and that it is an international practice. It is not a matter of consensus. It is a matter of following international practice. It is to protect the public and ensure that we should have the supply of pork as soon as possible and that the disease does not transmit to the local community.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Hospital Authority announces a blood reagent product recall incident

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Hospital Authority today (May 31) announces a blood reagent product recall incident:

Hospital Authority (HA) received notification from the Department of Health that a medical device manufacturer Bio-Rad has recalled two batches of blood reagent. It is suspected that the two batches of blood reagent may give false negative result of anti-Mia antibodies during red blood cell antibodies screening.

HA has informed the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service and all hospital blood banks to suspend using the concerned reagent, as well as to trace the location of the potential affected blood products. As the BTS also provides blood products to private hospitals, HA will liaise closely with the Department of Health and private hospitals to follow up.

In general, patient may not necessarily have adverse transfusion effect after receiving the potential affected blood product. HA will investigate if any patients have received the potential affected blood product and their conditions will be closely monitored.

The information of the two batches of blood reagent are as follows:

Bio-Rad
ID-DiaCell I-II-III Asia
ID number: 45330

Reference number: 003614

IHD Batch numbers: 45330 52 1 and 45330 52 2

SAP Batch numbers: 375053521 and 378425522

CHP investigates case of measles infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (May 31) investigating a case of measles infection.

The case involves a 30-year-old man with good past health, who has developed fever since May 26 and rash since May 29. He attended the Outpatient Department at Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital on May 29 and 30. He was then referred to the Accident and Emergency Department at Pok Oi Hospital on May 30 and was subsequently admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital for treatment.

A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition all along. The patient's measles vaccination history is unknown. He travelled to Vietnam and the United States during the incubation period but had no travel history during the communicable period.

According to the patient, he did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Investigations are ongoing. The public places the patient visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Those who might have had contact with the patient during the period of communicability are urged to observe if they have developed measles-related symptoms, and to seek medical treatment immediately if such symptoms appear. If they need to visit any health care facilities during the period of medical surveillance, they should also report whether they have symptoms and prior measles exposure history to the healthcare workers so that appropriate infection control measures can be implemented at the healthcare facilities concerned to prevent any potential spread."

The spokesman explained that measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can

pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of skin rash.

"The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals," the spokesman advised.