

Make work arrangements for and after typhoons and rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (September 16) reminded employers to make practical and reasonable work arrangements for staff in times of typhoons and rainstorms, including resumption of work after a typhoon warning is cancelled. This will help maintain good labour-management relations and ensure the safety of employees and the smooth operation of organisations.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work promptly upon cancellation of a typhoon or rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly, " an LD spokesman said.

"As typhoons and rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, employers should not deduct wages or allowances 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 annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days employees are entitled to under the Employment Ordinance to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from employees' failure to report for duty upon the issue of Typhoon Signal No. 8 or the announcement of a Black Rainstorm Warning. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with the 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.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for death 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).

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (September 16) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	18
Affected areas involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Camel ride
Hospital	Princess Margaret Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The Hajj pilgrimage ended in late August. If pilgrims feel unwell during the two weeks after returning to Hong Kong, they should wear a surgical mask and seek medical attention immediately and inform a doctor of their recent travel history, including transit.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt

appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Tropical Cyclone Mangkhut situation report (5)

The Hurricane Signal No. 10 issued by the Hong Kong Observatory this morning (September 16) remains in force.

The Home Affairs Department has so far opened 48 temporary shelters in various districts and 1 219 people have sought refuge at the shelters.

As at 5pm, the 1823 Government Call Centre has received 179 reports of fallen tree and the Drainage Services Department has received 26 confirmed flooding cases. According to the Civil Engineering and Development Department and Lands Department, no report of landslide has been received.

According to the Hospital Authority, as at 5pm, a total of 213 people, including 117 men and 96 women, have sought medical treatment at public hospitals during the typhoon period.

The MTR Corporation is providing limited services. Tram, Peak Tram and ferry services were suspended. On air traffic, the Airport Authority Hong Kong reported that a total of 889 flights have been cancelled today.

EDB announces class suspension of all schools tomorrow

Severe Typhoon Mangkhut has brought about frequent strong winds and heavy rain, which have adversely affected Hong Kong. Considering that it takes time to clean and repair community facilities and the need to ensure student safety, the Education Bureau announces class suspension of all schools tomorrow (September 17) regardless of whether any Tropical Cyclone Signal and Rainstorm Warning Signal will still be in force.

In accordance with the established guideline on contingency measures, schools should keep their premises open under safe conditions and arrange staff members to take care of students who have a genuine need to return to school in a safe place within the school premises. Parents should consider factors, such as their home conditions, the road conditions in the vicinity, the local district weather and the care that their children need when deciding whether to send them to school.

Classes of all evening schools suspended

Attention TV and radio duty announcers:

Please broadcast the following special announcement by the Education Bureau concerning schools and repeat it at suitable intervals:

Classes of all evening schools are suspended today (September 16).