

Health risk category for Air Quality Health Index may reach "Serious" Level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal pollution levels. At 1pm today (September 11), the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at some general stations reached 8, corresponding to the "Very High" health risk category.

Under the influence of the Tropical Cyclone Barijat, the weather in Hong Kong today is hazy with sunny periods and a moderate northerly wind. Higher than normal levels of particulates have been recorded in the territory since this morning. Hong Kong is being affected by an air mass with higher background pollutant concentrations. The sunshine enhances photochemical smog activity and the formation of ozone and fine particulates, resulting in high pollution in the Pearl River Delta region. The high level of ozone has promoted the formation of nitrogen dioxide, particularly in parts of the urban areas and at the roadside. It is expected that the AQHI at some general and roadside air monitoring stations may reach the "Serious" level later today.

According to the Hong Kong Observatory, Tropical Cyclone Barijat will move across the northern part of the South China Sea in the next couple of days, bringing unsettled weather to the coastal areas of Guangdong. It is expected that pollution levels will improved by then.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" range or above, children, the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public are advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time staying outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from health-care professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB's website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows: www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html.

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of

outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings at the EPD's website (www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.

First stage Area Ovitrap Index for Aedes albopictus for September to be uploaded to FEHD's website from tomorrow

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (September 11) that it will release additional results for the Area Ovitrap Index for Aedes albopictus (AOI) in two more stages starting from September to keep the public abreast of the latest situation of mosquito infestation and enhance the function of the ovitrap indices in enabling them to stay vigilant. The FEHD will also continue to announce the monthly AOI of various areas in Hong Kong to give the public a monthly overview of the infestation level of mosquitoes to facilitate timely implementation of corresponding mosquito prevention and control measures. The AOI released at the first stage in September will be successively uploaded to the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/dengue_fever/index.html) starting from tomorrow.

"A number of local dengue fever (DF) cases have been recorded in Hong Kong since mid-August and members of the public are very concerned about mosquito problems in the areas in which they live. In view of this, the FEHD, starting from September, has enhanced the arrangement for announcing the AOI. Before the announcement of the monthly AOI, additional AOI results will be released in two preceding stages," an FEHD spokesman said.

Aedes albopictus is the main vector for DF virus transmission. The ovitrap indices indicate the extensiveness of the distribution of Aedine mosquitoes in various areas, which is useful in alerting the public to take anti-mosquito and personal protective measures.

At present, the FEHD conducts two-week surveillance to monitor the breeding of Aedes albopictus at 57 surveyed areas every month. During the surveillance period, all ovitraps will be retrieved after the completion of surveillance in the first and second weeks (i.e. two times) and examined immediately for the presence of larvae of Aedes albopictus. The ovitraps will then be incubated in the laboratory for another week to confirm if there are any undetected eggs that would hatch into larvae of Aedes albopictus. Hence,

the whole survey period lasts for about three weeks.

Starting from September, the FEHD will release the data as soon as possible every time after the ovitraps are retrieved. Apart from the release of the AOI in those two stages, under normal circumstances, the AOI of each month will be available for uploading successively to the FEHD's website starting from the fourth week of the same month at the soonest. After the AOI results of all surveyed areas are uploaded to the FEHD's website, the monthly average Ovitrap Index of the territory will be announced. At every stage, the FEHD will follow the established practice of notifying relevant government departments of the aforementioned indices so that they can carry out targeted mosquito prevention and control work promptly to strengthen the anti-mosquito efforts.

To prevent the spread of DF, the Government will continue the All-out Anti-mosquito Operation relentlessly. The spokesman also urged members of the public to keep on taking effective mosquito prevention and control measures at home, including clearing stagnant water, scrubbing vases and pot plant saucers at least once a week and disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes properly, to prevent mosquito breeding. In addition, they should also adopt personal protective measures, including avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time and wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent when outdoors. The public can make reports to government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley tomorrow

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley tomorrow (September 12). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

– Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;

- Vehicles from eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic arrangements will be implemented from 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Vehicles from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic on southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and

– Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.

SFH speaks on mosquito control work

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session after inspecting the mosquito prevention and control work in Sha Tin District with the Sha Tin District-led Actions Scheme Steering Group of Hygiene Improvement with Enhanced Anti-Mosquitos/Grass-Cutting today (September 11):

Reporter: What are the determining factors for you to decide that Lion Rock Park can be opened to the public again? Are you worried that the public is being complacent now that the outbreak has stabilised?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, we have less confirmed cases in the past few weeks. And in fact, in the past week, we do not have any new confirmed cases. On one hand, we felt the situation is more or less under

control but on the other hand, I think the public should continue to be very vigilant about their own mosquito prevention work. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) continues to do our mosquito control work. If you remember, I announced that the Government has put in additional resources, \$4 million, for the 18 districts to buy more equipment, to increase manpower, as well as to do more public education. So the increase in resources and the mosquito control work will continue in the 18 districts. We felt that the most important work in controlling dengue fever is mosquito control.

As far as the Lion Rock Park is concerned, it was closed on August 17. We are now assessing the situation both on whether there is any new case, as well as the effectiveness of the mosquito control work by the FEHD.

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

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (September 11) that the Environmental Protection Department has classified the water quality at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District as Grade 4, which means the beach is not suitable for swimming. The red flag has been hoisted. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach until further notice.