

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 (August 28) 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.

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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.

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CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in second quarter of 2018 (with photo)

A total of 154 additional cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in the second quarter of 2018, bringing the cumulative total of reported HIV infections to 9 387 since 1984.

Reviewing the latest HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) situation in Hong Kong at a press conference today (August 28), the Consultant (Special Preventive Programme) of the CHP, Dr Kenny Chan, said that sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission.

"HIV is the cause of AIDS and, without treatment, about half of those with HIV will progress to AIDS within 10 years. On the contrary, early HIV treatment prevents AIDS and significantly prolongs survival," he said, urging HIV-positive people to seek specialist care as soon as possible.

Dr Chan also stressed the importance of proper use of condoms in reducing the risk of contracting HIV. Men who have sex with men (MSM), who dominate the epidemic, are strongly urged to use a condom for safer sex.

Of the 154 HIV cases, 127 males and 27 females, reported in the above quarter, 77 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 38 via heterosexual contact. The routes of transmission of the remaining 39 cases have yet to be determined due to inadequate information.

The new cases were reported by three major sources: public hospitals and clinics (65 cases), the DH's Social Hygiene Clinics (28 cases) and AIDS service organisations (21 cases). Among them, 105 (69 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

In addition, 40 new cases of AIDS were reported in the above quarter, bringing the total number of reported AIDS cases to 1 925 since 1985. Among the new cases, 55 per cent were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact and 43 per cent were related to heterosexual contact.

In the above quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness was *Pneumocystis pneumonia*, a kind of chest infection.

"Members of the public, particularly high-risk groups, should use the condom consistently and properly. Those with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. People who inject drugs should avoid sharing needles with others and receive methadone treatment or other appropriate treatments as soon as possible," Dr Chan said.

The public can call the DH's AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV antibody test. The public may visit the DH's Virtual AIDS Office (www.aids.gov.hk), the Red Ribbon Centre (www.rrc.gov.hk), the AIDS Hotline website (www.27802211.com), the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.com) and the Harm Reduction website (www.harmreduction.gov.hk) for more information on HIV/AIDS.

