

Employers and employees should take precautions against heat stroke

As the Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate precautions to prevent heat stroke when working in a hot or humid environment.

Heat stroke could occur if an employee works in a hot or humid environment for prolonged periods of time, as the body may fail to regulate its temperature by effective heat dissipation through sweating.

The early symptoms of heat stroke include feeling thirsty, fatigue, nausea and headache. Later, the victim may experience shortness of breath, rapid and weak pulse, dizziness, confusion or even loss of consciousness and convulsion.

For example, construction workers, cleaning workers, kitchen workers and porters are more prone to heat stroke when working for long hours in such an environment, especially if appropriate preventive measures have not been taken.

The LD reminds employers to arrange for a suitable assessment of the risk of heat stress in the work environment and take appropriate preventive measures. The LD has produced two leaflets entitled "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Construction Sites" and "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Outdoor Cleansing Workplaces" respectively. Employers engaged in construction or outdoor cleaning work are advised to refer to these checklists in assessing the risk of heat stress at their workplaces. As for heat stress assessment at a workplace in general, employers can refer to a booklet entitled "Risk Assessment for the Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" produced by the LD.

The LD also reminds employers and employees to take the following precautions to prevent heat stroke:

Employers

- (1) Take heed of the weather report and adopt shift work arrangements for employees to reduce their exposure to the hot environment, or arrange appropriate rest breaks for them during very hot periods;
- (2) Avoid working under direct sunlight and set up temporary sunshade wherever possible;
- (3) Provide cool potable water for employees at all times during work. If necessary, provide drinks containing minerals for employees to replenish loss of electrolytes during profuse sweating;
- (4) Minimise physical demands by using tools or mechanical aids at work;
- (5) Increase air flow by enhancing ventilation or air-conditioning as

appropriate;

(6) Isolate heat-generating facilities at the workplace and use insulating materials to minimise heat dissipation to the other work areas; and

(7) Provide relevant information and training for employees on heat stroke such as preventive measures and first aid treatment.

Employees

(1) Wear clothing made of suitable materials (for example, cotton) that is loose-fitting and light-coloured to help heat dissipation, minimise heat absorption and allow sweat evaporation;

(2) Wear a wide-brimmed hat when working outdoors;

(3) Drink plenty of water or other appropriate beverages to replenish the fluids and electrolytes lost through sweating; and

(4) Whenever there are any symptoms of heat stroke, inform supervisors and take appropriate actions immediately.

Some employees may have difficulty in adapting to a hot working environment owing to their own health conditions. Employers should take this into account and consider the recommendations of their doctors when assigning work to these employees.

In addition to the publications on risk assessment, the LD has produced a leaflet entitled "Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work in a Hot Environment" for the public. The publications can be obtained free of charge from the offices of the Occupational Health Service of the LD, or downloaded from the department's webpage at www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_9.htm.

The LD organises occupational health talks in public places and at its own training venues regularly to raise employers' and employees' awareness of occupational health. Details of health talks on the prevention of heat stroke at work in a hot environment in August to September are as follows:

(A)

Dates: August 13 and 30 and September 13 and 24 (am)

August 8 and 22 and September 5, 20 and 27 (pm)

Time: Half-day

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour Department, 13/F, Kowloon Tsuen Wan I, 68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories

(B)

Dates: August 10 and 20

Time: Half-day, morning

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Centre of the Labour Department, G/F, Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong (MTR Kwun Tong Station Exit A1)

(C)

Date: August 13

Time: 3pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road,
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station Exit E)

(D)

Date: September 14

Time: 3pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Activity Room I, Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road,
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

(Opposite Victoria Park, MTR Tin Hau Station Exit B)

For enrolment or enquiries about these occupational health talks, please call 2852 4040 or 2361 8240 (for talks organised at the Occupational Safety and Health Centre). Moreover, the LD also provides an outreach health education service and occupational health nurses will, on invitation, disseminate occupational health information at workplaces at a convenient time. Please contact the nursing officer at 2852 4062 for details. All these health talks are free of charge.

Labour Department enhances Youth Employment and Training Programme to promote youth employment

The Labour Department (LD) will expand the scope of the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) in September to cover part-time on-the-job training and raise the ceiling of the monthly on-the-job training allowance. The aim is to encourage employers to hire young people and provide them with quality on-the-job training with a view to promoting youth employment.

Under the enhanced programme, the scope of paid on-the-job training, which lasts for six to 12 months, will be expanded from full-time employment only (i.e. no less than 30 working hours per week) to cover part-time jobs as well (i.e. 18 to under 30 working hours per week), with effect from September 1, in order to meet the needs of some young people who are more interested in taking up part-time jobs.

In addition, to encourage employers to provide different kinds of on-the-job training positions to offer young job seekers more choices, the maximum monthly on-the-job training allowance payable to employers, who engage young people in paid full-time or part-time on-the-job training through YETP, will be increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per trainee employed. The revised on-the-job training allowance will be 50 per cent of the trainee's monthly salary, subject to a ceiling of \$4,000 per month, payable for a period of six to 12 months.

The YETP provides a comprehensive job search platform with one-stop and diversified pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. The programme enables young people to better understand themselves and their work aptitudes while enriching their job skills and experience for better employability in future.

Enrolment in the YETP is free of charge and on a year-round basis, without any minimum academic qualification requirements. The services provided by the YETP include pre-employment training, one-month workplace attachment training, on-the-job salaried training for six to 12 months, off-the-job vocational training allowance, as well as 12-month case management services provided by registered social workers. Trainees will be provided with personalised career guidance, job search assistance and employment support. All eligible young people are welcome to apply.

To showcase the improvement of trainees after joining the YETP and commend training bodies and employers for their caring efforts, the LD will, in collaboration with Radio 2 of Radio Television Hong Kong, hold the Award Ceremony of YETP Most Improved Trainees cum Concert "Solar Project 2018 – Dream Journey with YETP" at Queen Elizabeth Stadium at 7.30 pm on August 23. Music bands and pop singers will perform in the show and deliver supportive messages to youth, and in particular give encouragement to secondary school leavers to overcome challenges in pursuit of their dreams.

Young people who would like to join the programme or obtain free tickets for the concert may visit YETP's website at www.yes.labour.gov.hk. The LD has also set up a Youth Employment Services hotline 2112 9932 to provide a one-stop enquiry service on the programme and receive training vacancies from interested employers.

[Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme starts today](#)

The Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme started today (August 6) to subsidise in phases asymptomatic Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75 to undergo screening tests for the prevention of colorectal cancer.

Launched by the Department of Health (DH), the Programme will be implemented in three phases, with people aged 61 to 75, i.e. those born in the years 1942 to 1957, as the first batch to join starting from today to undergo screening tests. Phase two will cover those aged 56 to 75 while phase three will extend to those aged 50 to 75. Eligible participants will be defined by their years of birth and the details and commencement dates of phases two and three will be announced in due course.

The Programme is heavily subsidised by the Government. Participants will attend a medical consultation by an enrolled primary care doctor (PCD) to receive Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) screening. A Government subsidy of \$280 per consultation applies including the second consultation to follow up on a positive FIT test result. Meanwhile, under the standard colonoscopy service package, the subsidy amount is \$8,500 if polyp removal is necessary, while the amount is \$7,800 if no polyp removal is needed. Colonoscopy specialists may charge a co-payment not exceeding \$1,000 when providing the standard colonoscopy examination service.

Details of the screening pathway are as follows:

- (1) Eligible persons must first make an appointment with a PCD participating in the Programme. After enrolment in the Programme, the participant will receive a government subsidy to undergo the FIT; and
- (2) If the FIT result is positive, the participant will be referred to see a colonoscopy specialist who has enrolled in the Programme to receive colonoscopy examination subsidised by the Government in order to find out the cause of bleeding.

To date, 685 PCDs have enrolled in the Programme covering nearly 1 009 locations, and 97 per cent of these PCDs will not charge any co-payment. In addition, 171 colonoscopy specialists have joined the Programme to provide colonoscopy examination services at 336 service locations. If no polyp removal is necessary, about 80 per cent will not require additional charges. If polyp removal is needed, about 70 per cent will not require additional charges. Those who are interested in the Programme can visit the DH's thematic website www.colonscreen.gov.hk for more information and find a list of enrolled PCDs.

The DH in September 2016 launched the Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot Programme to subsidise asymptomatic Hong Kong residents born from 1946 to 1955 to undergo screening tests in phases. As of July 26 this year, about 78 000 eligible persons (i.e. 9.5 per cent of the target population) had participated in the Pilot Programme and undergone FIT screening.

FIT-negative participants under the Pilot Programme are also reminded to receive FIT re-screening every two years in order to maximise the Programme's capability to prevent colorectal cancer. Starting from the end of September this year, the first batch of FIT-negative participants, who have joined the Pilot Programme since 2016, will begin to receive re-screening notifications via SMS, email or postal mail. They can visit any enrolled PCD clinic to receive subsidised FIT re-screening services.

Eligible persons are also reminded to enrol in the electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS) prior to joining the Programme. For details, please visit the eHRSS website at www.ehealth.gov.hk or call the Registration Office at 3467 6300.

The DH has also set up a dedicated hotline (3565 6288), which is operated by trained staff to provide a direct response to public enquiries as a more convenient service for the public.

Missing man in Tsuen Wan located

A man who went missing in Tsuen Wan was located.

Leung Wa-kan, aged 55, went missing after he was last seen in a hostel on Tsuen King Circuit on August 3 morning. Staff of the hostel made a report to Police on the same day.

The man was located on Ma Tau Pa Road in Tsuen Wan on August 4 night. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 6) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and

facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;

- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable, and start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Get into a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index remains high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear loose long-sleeved clothing made of close-woven fabrics;
- Wear a wide brim hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming or sweating; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may get more information from the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.