

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 (May 25) 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.

Assess the risk of heat stroke to employees

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force, they should assess the risk of heat stroke to their employees and adopt effective preventive measures such as providing cool drinking water, setting up temporary sunshade and providing mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion of employees. Employees should drink water regularly and be mindful of their physical condition. If early heat stroke symptoms such as headache and thirst appear, they should inform their supervisors and seek medical help immediately.

Very Hot Weather Warning issued

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

Fatal traffic accident in Tsing Yi

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Tsing Yi today (May 24) in which a 63-year-old man died.

At about 5.02pm, a medium goods vehicle (MGV) driven by a 33-year-old man was travelling along Tsing Yi Heung Sze Wui Road towards Kowloon. When approaching near Cheung Wan Street, it reportedly knocked down the 63-year-old male cyclist who was crossing the road.

Sustaining injuries on face and chest, the man was rushed to Princess Margaret Hospital in unconscious state. He was certified dead at 5.41pm.

The MGV driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for further enquiries.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories South is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 1300 or 3661 1446.

Government's response to media enquiries on the removal of two trees at Bonham Road in front of Tang Chi

Ngong Building of the University of Hong Kong

In response to media enquiries on the removal of two large trees at Bonham Road in front of Tang Chi Ngong Building of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), a Government spokesman today (May 24) made the following statement:

The health and structure of the two Banyan trees on both sides of the slope entrance at Tang Chi Ngong Building in the HKU, Bonham Road, have shown signs of distress. The trunks were leaning towards the footpath along Bonham Road, impacting the structural integrity of the wall, which showed clear signs of deformation, cracking and leaning to the two trees. In view of deteriorating tree conditions, the Government removed the two Banyan trees on May 20.

Since mid-2015, the HKU, members of the Central and Western District Council (C&W DC) and local residents have expressed concern about the safety of the two trees. A professional arborist under the Lands Department's tree management contract conducts regular inspection and maintenance of the two trees every six months. The maintenance works included pruning to reduce the weight of the tree canopy and removal of fungal infected parts. In spite of this, the health condition of the trees did not improve. In December 2017, after detailed inspections and assessments, the professional arborist concluded that the health and structure of the two trees had continued to deteriorate, including leaning towards the footpath (Tree 1 (T1) and Tree 2 (T2) tilted at 30 and 15 degrees respectively), sparse foliage, relatively low live crown ratios, asymmetric crowns, and tree cavities (about 30 x 30 x 20 cm and about 50 x 30 x 20 cm for T1 and T2 respectively). The results of resistograph for T1 also confirmed decay at the tree cavity.

Moreover, the structure of the wall adjacent to the trees had been impacted by tree growth. The wall leans towards the footpath and road, with deformations and multiple cracks. The walls showed obvious signs of tilting towards Bonham Road, indicating danger of collapse. In a heavy rain event typical of Hong Kong, torrential rain can wash away the soil around the tree roots through the cracks on the walls. This will inevitably destabilise the trees and might lead to sudden collapse of both the destabilised trees and walls. Having regard to the above considerations, the trees had to be removed before the full onset of the wet season in the interest of public safety.

The Government understands that the public love and care for trees. In the past two plus years, we have actively explored different options to retain the two trees as far as practicable, including installation of props to support the tree trunks. We have also studied the practicability of installing steel cables as proposed by the HKU. Due to limited space for anchorage, the leaning walls and its overall unstable structure, it would not be feasible for the walls to bear the pulling force of the steel cables.

Moreover, as the roots of the trees are already wrapped around the walls, there is plausible risk of the walls and trees collapsing together. Therefore, installing the steel cables cannot reduce the risk of collapse of the two trees and the wall. In view of the heavy traffic and high pedestrian volume along the narrow Bonham Road, it is not appropriate to place large props to support the two trees which may be weighing several tons.

On April 26, the Tree Management Office of Development Bureau invited experts of the Urban Forestry Advisory Panel to conduct a field trip to stonewall and wall trees in Hong Kong, including the two trees on Bonham Road, and broached the proposal of tree removal. Panel members agreed that alternative measures to retain the trees were not practicable, and their removal is necessary in view of the danger they pose to public safety.

In consideration of the heavy traffic and high pedestrian volume on the narrow Bonham Road adjacent to the two trees, and recognising that the proposed mitigation measures might not be able to reduce the risk of the collapse of the two trees and walls, the Government proposed to remove the trees to protect public safety. The proposal was submitted to the Food, Environment, Hygiene & Works Committee (the FEHW Committee) of the C&W DC (http://www.districtcouncils.gov.hk/central/doc/2016_2019/tc/committee_meetings_doc/FEHWC/13792/20180517_FEHWC_Paper_39_2018_R1.pdf). The paper, which contains photos showing the defects of the trees, details the reasons for tree removal and provides the relevant tree assessment documentation. On May 17, the Government representatives also attended the meeting of the FEHW Committee to explain the proposal, as well as communicated with other stakeholders, including the HKU, nearby schools, and residents, etc. through various channels to explain the reasons of the proposed removal works, particularly the importance of protecting public safety.

There was comment that the lack of signs of decay in a cross-section of the tree stump indicated that the trees were still healthy. It should be noted that the decayed parts are below the cross-section. From the professional point of view, the health conditions of the trees are reflected by other signs, such as the sparse foliage and relatively low live crown ratio, etc. We must point out that the Government has considered various factors in deciding to remove the trees, including the stability of the trees and supporting wall, the health and structure of the trees, their location, utilisation of affected facilities, and the practicalities of alternative mitigation measures, etc.

The Government cherishes our trees, but is also mindful of the threats unhealthy trees may pose to life and property. Noting from past cases, tree failures are always sudden, and there is no way that pedestrians and vehicles can escape when tree failure occurs. Therefore, when a tree becomes an overwhelming risk to the public, the Government is obliged to remove it to ensure public safety.