

# Make work arrangements for and after typhoons and rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (September 17) 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](http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf)).

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## Government fully committed to performing relief work after passage of Mangkhut

A spokesperson for the Security Bureau (SB) yesterday (September 16) said that, as Super Typhoon Mangkhut was moving away from Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Observatory issued No. 8 Storm Signal at 7.40 pm, the government would be fully committed to performing the relief work.

The SB has contacted relevant government departments in the evening during which the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, had telephone conferences with the Secretaries of the related bureaux, including the Education Bureau, Development Bureau, Transport and Housing Bureau, and Food and Health Bureau, to jointly review the work and relief arrangement by various departments. They also agreed to request all relevant departments to be fully devoted in the relief and recovery work.

The Education Bureau earlier announced class suspension of all schools today (September 17). All relevant government departments, including Drainage Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Highways Department, Home Affairs Department, Transport Department and all emergency rescue departments have immediately commenced the relief and recovery work. The effort will be further enhanced after the cancellation of the No. 8 Storm Signal. The government will dedicate all necessary resources to ensure that the society could resume normal operation as quickly as possible.

The government expresses appreciation to all personnel from different departments and relevant organisations for their dedication to their jobs. They have overcome all difficulties and challenges in minimising the damages brought by Mangkhut under the unprecedented risks and threats.

The government is also grateful to members of the public for gearing up the precautionary measures, and for their co-operation with various departments in the precautionary, emergency and rescue work. The government also expresses its gratitude towards the mass media for disseminating latest information to ensure the whole community was well prepared for Mangkhut.

As the damages by Mangkhut were severe and extensive, the cleaning and relief work has already commenced, and will be carried out according to priority. The work is challenging, and members of the public may continue to feel inconvenienced. The government appeals to members of the public for their understanding and co-operation. They are also advised to pay attention to the latest announcement by government departments and relevant organisations, and contact the Police or call government hotline 1823 for assistance or enquiries.

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## CE expresses gratitude to personnel on duty during passage of Super Typhoon Mangkhut

While Super Typhoon Mangkhut is departing Hong Kong, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, yesterday (September 16) expressed her gratitude to personnel who, during the passage of the typhoon, provided rescue and other emergency services, handled emergencies and maintained necessary public services to members of the public, jointly minimising the impact of the typhoon on the city.

"All personnel of disciplinary forces, various auxiliary services, the Hong Kong Observatory, all relevant departments as well as organisations and contractors which provide public services stayed committed to their work during inclement weather. Whether in the front line, back office or on standby to handle various emergencies, they served members of the public, protected their lives and property, and ensured public safety with professionalism and selflessness. Members of the press also discharged their duties well by providing the latest updates on the typhoon and reported the latest situation on the streets to members of the public. I, on behalf of the people of Hong Kong, would like to express to them heartfelt thanks," Mrs Lam said.

"The magnitude of Mangkhut rendered more than 200 people, including rescue personnel, injured (of which the majority sustained minor injuries and did not need to be admitted to hospitals) and caused more than 60 flooding cases (in which only seven were serious cases), damaging a number of homes, shops and buildings. Electricity and water supply were affected in individual places. My sympathies to all those who were affected and wished the injured people and rescue personnel a speedy recovery. As bad weather may last for some time and the damage caused by Mangkhut may not be fully apparent, people are urged to continue to be vigilant."

"The fact that we could keep the impact of Mangkhut on Hong Kong to a minimum is down to the vigilance of relevant bureaux, departments and organisations which mobilised the necessary manpower and resources to put in place precautionary measures. The efforts include setting up an inter-departmental committee by the Security Bureau involving over 30 departments and organisations, advancing the activation of the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre and the opening of the temporary shelters throughout the territory, assisting in the evacuation of residents from lowland areas and the installation of stop-logs, etc. Many organisations have put in place various measures, including airlines which made arrangements for travelers to adjust their itineraries. Members of the public in general have made preparations in anticipation of the typhoon. I believe all these efforts

have paid off. The resources put in by the Government in enhancing slope safety, reducing flooding blackspots and assisting in the repairs and maintenance of old buildings over the years have also strengthened our city's ability to withstand natural disasters."

"The Government has immediately proceeded with the recovery work. We will mobilise resources and join hands with relevant organisations to clear roads and streets, remove fallen trees and objects, repair damage facilities, etc. with a view to resuming the city's operation and people's daily life to normal as soon as possible. I appeal to the understanding of members of the public as the work may take a bit of time and may cause disruption to them. In addition, the Education Bureau has announced class suspension of all schools tomorrow. I would call for employers to show understanding and flexibility in handling staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work."

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## **SWD urges public not to take children / family members to care centres tomorrow**

The Social Welfare Department announces that due to the inclement weather and possible damages of traffic and road facilities, members of the public are advised not to take their children or family members to the child care centres, centres providing after school care programmes, elderly services centres and day rehabilitation units, including sheltered workshops and integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres tomorrow (September 17). Members of the public who have a genuine need to receive the services mentioned are advised to contact the service units concerned and confirm their operation conditions in advance.

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