

LD reminds employers and employees to take heat stroke preventive measures in times of Heat Stress at Work Warning

As the Heat Stress at Work Warning is now in effect, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate measures during the effective period of the warning to prevent heat stroke when working in hot weather or hot environments.

Employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor environments face high levels of heat stress and are at a relatively higher risk of heat stroke. Employers should assess the risk factors of heat stress for employees at work and, based on the identified risk factors, take necessary preventive and control measures, including rescheduling work periods, setting up shading covers, providing ventilation and heat dissipation equipment, and reminding employees to replenish water and rest in a timely manner.

The Heat Stress at Work Warning is formulated by the LD based on the Hong Kong Heat Index. There are three levels of the warning: Amber, Red and Black, which help employers and employees better understand the level of heat stress while working outdoors or indoors without air-conditioning systems.

A spokesman for the LD said that when the department issues the Heat Stress at Work Warning, employers must refer to the criteria and recommendations provided in the "[Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work](#)" to conduct risk assessments, according to the workloads and other relevant heat stress risk factors, for employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor workplaces. Appropriate rest breaks should be arranged every hour, as far as reasonably practicable, based on various levels of the Heat Stress at Work Warning, to reduce employees' risk of heat stroke.

Employees must also follow instructions to rest on time. Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as headache, dizziness, thirst, and nausea, they should rest in a cool and shady place, drink water, and inform employers/supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD issued the "Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work", detailing the various risk factors that should be considered when conducting heat stress risk assessments and recommending corresponding control measures for identified risk factors for employers' and employees' reference. For the Heat Stress at Work Warning and related guidelines, please refer to the department's thematic webpage:

www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news/prevention_of_heat_stroke_at_work.htm.

EPD convictions in July

Forty convictions were recorded in July 2023 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department.

Eight of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, six were under the Noise Control Ordinance, seven were under the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation, one was under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance, 13 were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance and five were under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

A company was fined \$25,000, which was the heaviest fine in July, for contravening the provisions of a licence.

Temporary suspension of LCSD's Mobile Library 1, 5, 6 and 11 services

Mobile Libraries 1, 5, 6 and 11 will suspend services during designated periods in September for routine maintenance, a spokesman for the Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (August 28).

Mobile Library 11 will suspend services from September 4 to 9. The affected service points are Cho Yiu Chuen, Kwai Shing West Estate and Kwai Shing East Estate in Kwai Chung; Po Tin Estate in Tuen Mun; Sun Chui Estate in Sha Tin; Easeful Court in Tsing Yi; and Tin Wah Estate in Tin Shui Wai. For enquiries about Mobile Library 11 services, please call 2479 1055.

Mobile Library 6 will suspend services from September 7 to 16. The affected service points are Shau Kei Wan Market on Shau Kei Wan Main Street East, Lei Tung Estate and Ap Lei Chau Estate in Ap Lei Chau, the First Aid Station at Shek O Beach and Tsui Lam Estate in Tseung Kwan O. For enquiries about Mobile Library 6 services, please call 2505 4690.

Mobile Library 1 will suspend services from September 11 to 16. The affected service points are Whampoa Garden in Hung Hom, Riviera Gardens in Tsuen Wan, Park Island in Ma Wan, Ko Yee Estate in Yau Tong, Kai Ching Estate in Kowloon City and Tsui Chuk Garden in Wong Tai Sin. For enquiries about Mobile Library 1 services, please call 2414 3157.

Mobile Library 5 will suspend services from September 18 to 23. The affected service points are Hin Keng Estate, Kam Tai Court, Mei Tin Estate

and Yan On Estate in Sha Tin; Yee Ming Estate and Mang Kung Uk Road in Sai Kung; and Fu Shin Estate and Fu Heng Estate in Tai Po. For enquiries about Mobile Library 5 services, please call 2696 5842.

Readers are welcome to use other public libraries during the service suspension periods. They may also renew library materials by telephoning 2698 0002 or 2827 2833, or via www.hkpl.gov.hk.

Labour Department launches special inspection exercise to ensure work safety

The Labour Department (LD) today (August 28) commenced a two-week special inspection exercise that targets high-risk processes, including work-at-height and electrical work, at construction sites, with the aim of curbing unsafe work activities and ensuring the work safety of workers.

A spokesman for the LD said, "We are highly concerned about the recent spate of fatal and serious work accidents that happened in the construction industry. The LD is saddened by the loss of life and the injuries suffered by workers, or even employers, in these accidents. The department will seriously follow up each accident and conduct full investigations to identify the causes of the accidents and ascertain the liabilities of duty holders. The LD will take actions pursuant to the law if there are any violations of the occupational safety and health legislation."

In light of the recent fatal and serious work accidents involving high-risk activities such as workers falling from height and being electrocuted, occupational safety officers will pay particular attention to these activities during the inspection exercise. They will closely monitor whether duty holders have provided safe systems of work for these specific work activities. If any violations of the legislation are detected, the LD will take strong enforcement actions, including issuing suspension notices and improvement notices, and initiating prosecutions without prior warning.

Under the general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, employers are obligated to provide safe working environments, plant and systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the relevant legislation with serious circumstances can be prosecuted on indictment, which is subject to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for two years; or \$3 million and imprisonment for six months on summary conviction of other cases.

The LD emphasises that contractors and employers should conduct proper

assessments of potential work hazards before the commencement of work, formulate safe work methods and adopt appropriate safety measures and procedures. Employees, on their part, should co-operate with their employers, adhere to all safety measures, and use provided personal protective equipment properly. Maintaining vigilance is crucial to preventing serious consequences.

The spokesman reiterated that safeguarding the occupational safety and health of construction workers is one of the prime tasks of the LD. Surprise inspections will continue to be conducted, and any violation of the occupational safety and health legislation will be addressed in accordance with the law.

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 28) 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.

"Children, the elderly, the obese and those with chronic illnesses, such as heart disease or high blood pressure, are more vulnerable to heat stroke. 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 can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;

- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

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

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed 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, sweating or towelling off; 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.

â€‹The public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report 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.