

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, providing mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion of employees and providing for employees as far as practicable covered space with good ventilation for rest and meals. 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 rest in a cool or shady place and drink water immediately. They should also inform their supervisors to take appropriate action.

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.

Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at building in Cheung Sha Wan

The Lands Department (LandsD) together with the Sham Shui Po Police District and the Department of Health conducted an enforcement operation today (August 13) at a building in Cheung Sha Wan, which was included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation started at around 8.30am and ended at around 11am today.

Starting from around 8.30am today, persons subject to compulsory testing of Tower 1, The Pacifica, Cheung Sha Wan, were requested to provide the SMS notification received through a mobile phone or related certification containing the results of COVID-19 tests, to show that they had taken such tests as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notice of the building within the specified period issued by the Government earlier on. The Government arranged for staff to verify the testing certifications of the persons subject to compulsory testing at the entrances/exits of the building, to verify whether persons subject to compulsory testing had undergone testing in compliance with the requirement.

During the operation, 331 persons were checked. Among them, 30 persons were found to have violated the compulsory testing notice. The Government has issued compulsory testing orders to them, requiring them to undergo testing within a specified period. Fixed penalty notices of \$10,000 each were also issued to 17 of them.

The Government wishes to thank the many residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notice for their co-operation to fight against the virus together. The Government will continue to enforce the law strictly. All persons subject to compulsory testing should comply with the compulsory testing notice. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The LandsD is grateful for the support and co-operation of the residents and relevant organisations. The Government understands that the enforcement process may cause some inconvenience to the residents, but hopes that the residents can understand.

Transcript of remarks by S for Health on quarantine arrangements at media session

â€œFollowing is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (August 13):

Reporter: For inbound residents whose homes are spacious enough to quarantine at home for the first three days, why do they have to spend extra to quarantine in a hotel when the government already allows infected residents to isolate at home? Do you think that is unfair for them? My second question is, are you unwilling to do "0+7" or completely remove quarantine like the rest of the world? The international community wants to know, can we see "zero-quarantine" by the end of this year?

Secretary for Health: The first question is, there is a difference between local residents who tested positive and those who came from abroad. The fact is that local residents are already in the community and are already living in their home environment. There is a difference. Whereas for those inbound passengers, they have not yet got into the community, so we have the responsibility to stop them getting into the community. For local residents, when they tested positive, they are already at home, and that is the difference. We have to stop the viruses coming from abroad. There is also the possibility of more variants of the virus coming from abroad, and we have to make sure that we protect the local community.

We would consider every option, but especially as the Secretary for Health, and for the Government as well in general, we have to realise that the control of COVID-19 is very important for the health and life of our people, our citizens. We cannot just look at economic activities. Our first priority is to protect the health and life of our people. We would consider every option if it is safe, but we have to have enough data to support whatever policy we are going to do, so we implement this "3+4" (model), which I have to emphasise that it is not a relaxation. It is really not a relaxation of our strategy. We still hold the opinion that we have to reduce infection, reduce serious disease and reduce death during the COVID-19 pandemic. Remember, "3+4" equals seven, so we are changing from a seven-day hotel quarantine into a "3+4" strategy which is also seven days. We have not reduced the length, but we change the four additional days of hotel quarantine into four days of medical surveillance, including the Amber Code which restricts their high-risk activities, and also requires more PCR testing (polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid testing), so that we can identify them and prevent the virus from getting into our local community.

Reporter: Can we see "zero" by the end of this year?

Secretary for Health: I cannot promise. It depends on the COVID-19 situation. Everyone hopes to have more resumption of travel and economic activities, but we have to look at the COVID-19 situation, and we have to remember that the virus continues to mutate and the pandemic is continuing to evolve. Even WHO (World Health Organization) and many experts have warned that the pandemic is not over yet. To say hastily that we will relax everything and go for a zero-quarantine measure will not be practical.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Government announces latest situation of fresh food supply from Mainland

A Government spokesman announced today (August 13) that the supply of fresh food from the Mainland yesterday (August 12) was sufficient and stable.

According to the latest information, the quantity of vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong yesterday (as of midnight) by land and water transportation was about 2 700 tonnes, comparable to the average daily supply from the Mainland on a normal day. The volume of vegetables sold through the wholesale markets of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Vegetable Marketing Organization was about 827 tonnes. The average wholesale prices of choi sum and pak choi stood at \$6.60 and \$7.10 per catty respectively yesterday. The supply of eggs to the wholesale market remained steady, with the average daily supply standing at about 3.6 million for the past week, comparable to the average daily supply on a normal day last year.

The total supply of chilled meat from the Mainland yesterday was about 46 tonnes. The supply of live pigs was plentiful.

The supply of chilled poultry from the Mainland was over 160 000 head yesterday, and about 9 000 live chickens were slaughtered locally. The supply was abundant.

Regarding the rice supply, in compliance with the requirement by the Government, stockholders of rice have to maintain the reserve stock of rice at a level sufficient for consumption by the local population for 15 days. The trade generally stocks double the required amount, which is sufficient for one month's consumption by Hong Kong citizens. In recent years, the import and consumption of rice in Hong Kong has stood at a steady level of around 320 000 to 330 000 tonnes per year. The import quantity (including reserve stock) as of end-June 2022 was 30 400 tonnes. Suppliers also maintain a reserve for food that can be stored, such as frozen meat, for around three months' stock generally.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the Mainland authorities and major food suppliers to ensure a stable food supply.

The AFCD updates and publishes the fresh food supply information daily. Members of the public may visit the AFCD website for updates on daily supplies and wholesale prices of fresh food (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/agriculture/agr_fresh/agr_fresh.html).