

Employers and employees should make work arrangements in times of rainstorm warnings

The Labour Department (LD) today (May 21) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for employees during and after rainstorm warnings and "extreme conditions" as early as possible, including arrangements on reporting for duty, release from work, resumption of work and remote work (if applicable). These arrangements not only can ensure the safety of employees and smooth operation of organisations, but also are conducive to maintaining good labour-management relations.

"Employers should make prior work arrangements and contingency measures for staff which are reasonably practicable. In drawing up and implementing the work arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety and the feasibility of employees travelling to and from their workplaces. Employers should also give consideration as much as possible to the different situations faced by individual employees, such as their place of residence and the road and traffic conditions in the vicinity, and adopt a sympathetic and flexible approach with due regard to their actual difficulties and needs," an LD spokesman said.

To avoid misunderstanding, disputes and confusion, employers should consult and engage employees when drawing up the arrangements and make appropriate updates or amendments based on the experience of each occasion and the needs of both employers and employees as well as the actual situations. The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- * arrangements in respect of reporting for duty;
- * arrangements in respect of early release from work;
- * arrangements in respect of resumption of work (e.g. the number of hours within which employees should resume duty after the warning concerned is cancelled or "extreme conditions" comes to an end, when safety and traffic conditions allow);
- * arrangements in respect of remote work such as work from home (if applicable) (e.g. duty and work arrangements during and after rainstorm warnings and "extreme conditions");
- * arrangements regarding working hours, wages and allowances (e.g. calculation of wages and allowances in respect of reporting for duty and absence); and
- * special arrangements in respect of staff required to report for duty in times of adverse weather or "extreme conditions".

"Employers should conduct a timely and realistic assessment of whether there is any need for requiring staff to report for duty at workplaces when rainstorm warning or 'extreme conditions' is in force. In making the assessment, employers should take into account the safety of employees, the

business nature, operational needs and urgency of service, with due regard to the manpower requirements, staffing establishment and individual situations of employees, and keep the number of staff at workplaces to the minimum as far as possible," the spokesman added.

If a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is issued during working hours, employees working indoors should continue to work as usual unless it is dangerous to do so. Supervisors of employees working outdoors or in exposed areas should suspend outdoor duties as soon as practicable. They should arrange for their employees to take shelter temporarily and resume duty only when weather conditions permit. If the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is still in force by the end of working hours, employees should stay in a safe place until the heavy rain has passed. A suitable area in the workplace should be made available by employers as temporary shelter for employees.

If the Government makes an "extreme conditions" announcement, apart from those required by employers to report for duty at workplaces, employees are advised to stay in the place they are currently in or in safe places when "extreme conditions" is in force, instead of heading for work. Employees who have already reported for duty at workplaces could continue to work as usual in a safe manner. If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release staff from work early under feasible conditions and in a safe manner or make available a safe place as temporary shelter for employees. If the working time ends while "extreme conditions" is still in force, employers can release employees from workplaces in a safe manner or provide a suitable area as temporary shelter for those still at workplaces.

If it is necessary for employees to report for duty at workplaces under adverse weather or "extreme conditions", employers should discuss and agree with them in advance on the duty arrangements and contingency measures. If public transport services are suspended or limited when the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or "extreme conditions" is in force, employers should provide safe transport services for employees travelling to and from workplaces, or grant them an extra travelling allowance.

The spokesman reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, Employees' Compensation Ordinance and Minimum Wage Ordinance.

"As natural calamities cannot be avoided, for employees who are not able to report for duty or resume work on time due to adverse weather or 'extreme conditions', employers should neither deduct their wages, good attendance bonuses or allowances, nor reduce employees' entitlement to annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days under the Employment Ordinance, or ask for additional hours of work from employees to compensate for the loss of working hours when they are unable to report for duty," he said.

Employers should note that they have an obligation to provide and maintain a safe working environment for their employees under the

Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance. If employees are required to work in times of tropical cyclone warnings, rainstorm warnings or "extreme conditions", employers should ensure that the risks at work are reduced as far as reasonably practicable. Moreover, under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for injuries or deaths 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 Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or higher, a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or "extreme conditions" is in force.

The LD has published the "Code of Practice in Times of Adverse Weather and 'Extreme Conditions'", which provides the major principles, reference guidelines and information on relevant legislation on making work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees. 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).

Inaugural Chinese Culture Festival to present two North Road Bangzi opera classics from Shanxi (with photos)

The inaugural Chinese Culture Festival (CCF), organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), will present two North Road Bangzi opera plays set in Tang dynasty, "Sobering Up after Being Drunk" and "Dotting the Eye of a Painted Dragon", by the Academy of Xinzhou Studies, in June. The two plays will be performed by the China Theatre Plum Blossom Award (Plum Blossom Award) winner and bearer of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage of North Road Bangzi opera, Yang Zhongyi, as well as the winner of the Plum Blossom Award and Wenhua Award, Cheng Fengying, respectively. It is also the first time for the Academy to perform in Hong Kong. This programme is one of the highlights of the 12th Chinese Opera Festival.

Bangzi is one of the four major vocal styles in Chinese opera and the North Road Bangzi opera is one of the four Bangzi opera genres of Shanxi with a history spanning more than 300 years. The regional genre was inscribed on the first list of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level in 2006, and is well known for its sonorous and impassioned vocals. The plays in its repertory are often inspired by historic epic tales and classical novels, and are rich in folk colours. The language is accessible, fully reflecting local characteristics.

The first performance is "Sobering Up after Being Drunk", which marks a

breakthrough in North Road Bangzi opera as it moves away from the usually serious style to become comedic. The imperial family of Emperor Tang Taizong and the Prime Minister, Fang Xuanling, in the play express their quick wit as they engage in their interactions. During the performance, Yang, who acts as Prime Minister Fang, will showcase the contrast between Fang's submissive obedience to imperial authority when sober and his transformation into an articulate and forceful Prime Minister when drunk, through stunts such as "kicking of the robes" and "turning of the headgear". He will also demonstrate his solid physical training and robust singing style, a perfect showcase of what makes the laosheng (old male) role in North Road Bangzi opera exceptional.

The second performance, "Dotting the Eye of a Painted Dragon", is a Plum Blossom Award-winning work performed by Cheng, who plays the young and talented Emperor Taizong of Tang. She incorporates martial arts skills when performing the stunt of "dragging feet" on a bridge, showing how the Emperor maintains his regal bearing despite his troubling circumstances. There are also comedic scenes with the local tyrant, accompanied by string and percussion music, showcasing the charm of North Road Bangzi opera.

Details of the two performances are as follows:

"Sobering Up after Being Drunk"

Date and time: June 21 (Friday), 7.30pm

Main cast: Yang Zhongyi, Jia Fentao, Zhang Yuping, Feng Huiling, Zhang Zhiqiang, Du Rui

Synopsis: The Emperor Taizong of Tang agrees to restore the dilapidated Luoyang Palace as the princess's dowry, but the Empress opposes such extravagance. She gifts the submissive and timid Prime Minister Fang Xuanling a bottle of wine, asking him to advise the Emperor against the dowry issue. Fang is emboldened by the wine and delivers his admonishment, passionately criticising the Emperor, and is detained in the palace for introspection. The Empress lies to the Emperor that Fang has died. Shocked and remorseful at this news, the Emperor bestows imperial wine in an attempt to encourage Fang to continue advising him after he learns the truth.

"Dotting the Eye of a Painted Dragon"

Date and time: June 22 (Saturday), 7.30pm

Main cast: Cheng Fengying, Jia Fentao, Guo Jing, Wang Maolin, Li Ruixing, Liu Hongliang, Du Rui, Kang Runquan

Synopsis: The Emperor Taizong of Tang, who is diligent in governing the country, orders officials to write proposals for governance. A scholar named Ma Zhou takes this opportunity to present the Emperor with a painting of a dragon with no pupils to criticise the flaws of the time. He then travels to Xinfeng, where he meets again Si Niang, his puppy love. Impressed by Ma's proposal, the Emperor thus travels incognito to search for Ma, during which he is taken advantage of by the corrupt county magistrate Zhao Yuankai. In the end, the Emperor punishes Zhao and recruits Ma successfully, but Si Niang dies with a grudge after dotting the dragon's eyes with her own blood to

protect her love.

The Academy of Xinzhou Studies is an enterprise under the direct administration of the Xinzhou Municipal Government. It was established in 2020 as part of cultural system reform in Xinzhou. The Academy is responsible for theoretical research on the city's drama, music and more. It carries research and creation, holds exhibitions and showcases, as well as promotes, safeguards and ensures the transmission of the legacies of North Road Bangzi opera, folk songs and other folk-cultural arts.

The two performances will be held at the Theatre of Hong Kong City Hall. Each performance will run for about two hours and 30 minutes, including an intermission of 15 minutes. Lyrics and dialogue are with Chinese and English surtitles. Tickets priced at \$180, \$280 and \$380 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.ccf.gov.hk/en/programme/academy-of-xinzhou-studies/.

A meet-the-artists session entitled "The Artistic Features of North Road Bangzi Opera" (in Putonghua) will be held at 7.30pm on June 20 (Thursday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The speakers include performers of the Academy Yang Zhongyi, Cheng Fengying, Jia Fentao, Zhang Yuping, Feng Huiling and Li Ruixing, while Chinese opera researcher Chan Chun-miu will be the moderator. Admission is free and online registration is required (www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_1716.html#tab_13_0). Limited seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The programme will also feature a session under the "Chinese Culture for All: A Special Performance Series" at 2.30pm on June 23 (Sunday) at the Theatre of Hong Kong City Hall, with free admission specially for local primary and secondary school students. Performed by artists from the Academy of Xinzhou Studies, the traditional play "Father and Son Both Received Appointment" will give students a chance to learn more about and appreciate the artistic style of Chinese regional opera so as to experience the wonders of Chinese culture and arts. Interested schools can call 2268 7325 for details.

The CCF, presented by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and organised by the LCSD's Chinese Culture Promotion Office, aims to enhance the public's appreciation of Chinese culture and cultivate citizens' national identity and cultural confidence. The inaugural CCF will be held from June to September. Through different performing arts programmes in various forms and related extension activities, including selected programmes of the Chinese Opera Festival, exemplary local arts projects recognised by the China National Arts Fund, performing arts programmes from arts and cultural organisations, film screenings, exhibitions, talks and more, the festival allows members of the public and visitors to experience the broad and profound Chinese culture with a view to promoting Chinese culture and patriotic education as well as enhancing national identity amongst the people

of Hong Kong, making contributions to the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems". For details, please visit the CCF website www.ccf.gov.hk.

The LCSD has long been promoting Chinese history and culture through organising an array of programmes and activities to enable the public to learn more about the broad and profound Chinese culture. For more information, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ccpo/index.html.



[Designated webpage for Secondary Six students with updated information for release of HKDSE exam results](#)

The results of the 2024 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination will be released on July 17. To assist Secondary Six (S6) students to prepare for the release of the results, the Education Bureau (EDB) has specially updated the "Designated Webpage for S6 Students" (s6.edb.edcity.hk/en) to provide students, parents and schools with the latest information on multiple pathways and important information on various support and counselling services.

Students can input their predicted or actual HKDSE Examination results to the mobile application "e-Navigator" (enavigator.edb.hkedcity.net/main/index.php?lang=en) to search for programmes including degrees, sub-degrees and the Diploma of Applied Education from local institutions for which they meet the minimum entrance requirements. Thus, they can work out appropriate further studies plans.

The webpage also provides timely updates on "Reminders for 2024 HKDSE Exam and Exam Results Release" infographics (s6.edb.edcity.hk/en/infographic.php) and other related information, including the latest information and support measures from the EDB, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA), the Joint University Programmes Admissions System Office and other non-governmental organisations. This can help S6 students plan their future studies and career pathways.

Moreover, the EDB has launched "Cheer Up Videos – HKDSE Examination Preparation and Results Release" to instil positive energy in S6 students. The videos have been uploaded in batches to the Cheer Up Zone on the webpage (s6.edb.edcity.hk/en/cheerup.php).

The EDB will continue to maintain close communication with schools and other stakeholders to help students plan for their future pathways. For the arrangements of the HKDSE Examination results release, please refer to the latest announcements on the website of the HKEAA (www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/).

[Missing woman in Kwai Chung located](#)

A woman who went missing in Kwai Chung has been located.

Lau Leung-ching, aged 56, went missing after she left a rehabilitation centre on Wo Tong Tsui Street on May 10 morning. Staff of the rehabilitation centre made a report to Police on the same day.

The woman was located at a hospital on Gascoigne Road in Yau Ma Tei this morning (May 21). No suspicious circumstances were detected.

[SCST to visit Xi'an](#)

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, will depart for Xi'an in Shaanxi Province today (May 21) in the afternoon. He will

attend a high-level meeting related to tourism.

Mr Yeung will return to Hong Kong on May 22 (Wednesday) in the evening. During his absence, the Under Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, will be the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism.