

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 5) reminded the public, particularly the elderly and people with chronic illnesses, to adopt appropriate measures to protect their health in view of the cold weather.

A spokesman for the CHP said that cold weather can easily trigger or exacerbate diseases, especially among the elderly and persons suffering from heart disease, respiratory illness or other chronic illnesses.

"Elderly people have less insulating fat beneath their skin to keep them warm and their body temperature control mechanism may be weaker. Their body may not be able to appropriately respond to the cold weather," the spokesman said.

Some senior persons may have decreased mobility, which can in turn slow down their ability to generate and conserve body heat. Chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and endocrine disorders, may undermine the health of elderly people and lower their metabolic rate, subsequently causing their body to generate less heat.

The CHP reminds the public, in particular the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses, to adopt the following preventive measures:

- Take note of the weather forecast. Wear warm clothing, including hats, scarves, gloves and socks accordingly;
- Consume sufficient food to ensure adequate calorie intake;
- Perform regular exercise to facilitate blood circulation and heat production;
- Stay in a warm environment and avoid prolonged outdoor exposure;
- Use heaters with care and maintain adequate indoor ventilation; and
- Seek medical advice if feeling unwell.

In addition, the public should avoid alcoholic beverages.

"Drinking alcohol cannot keep you warm. Alcohol accelerates the loss of body heat through dilated blood vessels, resulting in chilling instead," the spokesman said.

"Parents should ensure that babies are sufficiently warm, but it is also important to keep babies lightly clothed to avoid overheating them," the spokesman added.

Parents should observe the following safety measures when putting their children to bed:

- Keep the room well ventilated and with a comfortable temperature;
- Always place babies on their back to sleep. Babies usually sleep well without a pillow;
- Place babies on a firm and well-fitted mattress to sleep. Avoid soft objects and loose bedding;
- Leave their head, face and arms uncovered during sleep; and
- Let babies sleep in a cot placed in the parents' room and near their bed.

Members of the public are advised to take heed of the following advice to reduce the risk of getting influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Maintain adequate rest, a balanced diet and regular physical activity, and avoid stress and do not smoke;
- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good hand hygiene via proper handwashing or use of alcohol-based handrub;
- Ensure good ventilation;
- Wear a face mask in the event of influenza-like symptoms, while taking care of patients and when visiting hospitals or clinics;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper in a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands immediately afterwards;
- Seek medical advice when feeling unwell, and stay at home;
- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination, which is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications; and
- Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and persons aged 50 to 64, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination early. Please see details of the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme on the CHP's [website](#).

Food-borne diseases, particularly those linked to hot pot cuisine, are also common in cold weather. The following preventive measures should be taken:

- Wash hands before handling and consuming food;
- Do not patronise unlicensed vendors or those with poor hygienic standards while selecting food;
- Wash and cook all food thoroughly;
- Vegetables should be washed thoroughly in clean running water before cooking and consumption. When appropriate, scrub vegetables with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances, including pesticide residues and contaminants, from the surface and crevices;
- Shrimps should be fully cooked by cooking them until the shells turn red and the flesh turns white and opaque;
- For shellfish like scallops and geoduck, scrub the shells thoroughly and remove internal organs;
- Most hot pot ingredients should be stored in a refrigerator at 4 degrees Celsius or below, while frozen food should be stored in a freezer at -18

degrees C or below;

- Never use raw eggs as a dipping sauce for hot pot; and
- Use different sets of chopsticks to handle raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.

In addition, the public should not use charcoal as cooking fuel in poorly ventilated areas, especially indoors, to avoid harmful exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) and prevent CO poisoning. While using other kinds of fuel, the public should also ensure adequate ventilation.

For more health information, the public may call the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) or visit the [CHP's website](#) and [Facebook Fanpage](#).

The public may also call Dial-a-Weather (1878 200) or visit the website of the [Hong Kong Observatory](#) for the latest weather information and forecast, or its page on [Weather Information for Senior Citizens](#).

[HAD opens temporary cold shelters](#)

In view of the cold weather, the Home Affairs Department has opened 18 temporary shelters today (December 4) for people in need of the service.

The temporary shelters will remain open during the daytime tomorrow (December 5) when the cold weather warning is still in force.

To ensure that cold shelter users can rest in a quiet and undisturbed environment, members of the public or agencies wishing to make donations to shelter users are requested to register with the staff of the shelter first. Donors will then be directed to place the donated items at a specified indoor location. The staff will help notify the shelter users to collect the items on their own.

Anyone seeking temporary refuge or with any questions about the donation arrangements at the cold shelters may call the department's hotline 2835 1473 for more information.

The 18 temporary cold shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western:

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex, 2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern:

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern:

Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai:

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City:

Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices, 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong:

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po:

Nam Cheong District Community Centre
1 Cheong San Lane, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin:

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong:

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories:

Islands:

Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing:

Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre
15 Tai Wo Hau Road, Kwai Chung

North:

Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung:
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin:
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po:
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan:
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun:
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long:
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Fatal traffic accident in Tin Shui Wai

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Tin Shui Wai today (December 4) in which a 68-year-old man died.

At about 1.19pm, a light goods vehicle (LGV) driven by a 26-year-old man was travelling along Tin Shui Road southbound. When approaching Tin Wing Road, it reportedly knocked down the 68-year-old man who was using an electric wheelchair to cross the road.

Sustaining head injuries, the man was rushed to Tin Shui Wai Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 3.13pm.

The LGV driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death. He is being detained for further enquiries.

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

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers at 3661 3818 or 3661 3819.

FS announces further measures to support enterprises and employment

With the social and economic environment of Hong Kong facing unprecedented challenges, the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, announced today (December 4) a new package of measures to support enterprises and employment. Details are as follows:

(1) Waive 75 per cent of water and sewage charges for non-domestic households from December 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020, subject to a monthly cap of \$20,000 and \$12,500 respectively per household per month (Note 1). Government revenue will be reduced by about \$340 million and around 250 000 households will benefit;

(2) Provide an electricity subsidy to each eligible non-residential electricity account holder to cover 75 per cent of their monthly billed electricity charges, subject to a cap of \$5,000 per account per month for four months, i.e. \$20,000 in total per account. This involves about \$2.3 billion and the number of beneficiaries will be about 430 000;

(3) Provide an enhanced rates concession in the fourth quarter of 2019-20 (i.e. January 1 to March 31, 2020) to all non-domestic properties. The exemption ceiling for each non-domestic property chargeable to rates will be increased from \$1,500 to \$5,000 for that quarter. Government revenue will be further reduced by about \$600 million and around 260 000 non-domestic properties will benefit;

(4) Waive the surcharge on tax outstanding for up to one year for taxpayers in need who applied and obtained approval for payment of tax by instalments. The waiver is applicable for the 2018/19 year of assessment, and covers profits tax, salaries tax, and personal assessment;

(5) Use the turnover rent received from the terminal operator of the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal to offer, through the operator, fees and rent reduction for cruise lines and existing tenants to support cruise lines' continuous deployment and berthing in Hong Kong and promote the business of relevant sectors. The arrangement will last for six months with effect from December 1, 2019. A total of 105 ship calls and six existing tenants are expected to benefit;

(6) For the local recycling industry, after discussing with the Government, the Advisory Committee on Recycling Fund will launch a one-time rental subsidy scheme to recycling enterprises through the Recycling Fund. About \$100 million will be involved, and about 500 recycling street-corner stores and 400 open recycling sites will benefit. Details will be announced by the Committee separately;

(7) The Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) has responded to the Government's appeal and announced earlier today that it will waive the annual licence fees for all licensed individuals and intermediaries for the financial year 2020-21. The SFC's revenue will be reduced by about \$117.5 million and over 47 000 licensed individuals and intermediaries will benefit;

(8) The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) was entrusted by the Government earlier to launch the Love Upgrading Special Scheme (the Scheme). After discussing with the Government, the ERB will enhance and extend the Scheme, including to consider increasing the maximum amount of monthly allowance per trainee from \$4,000 to \$5,800 through legislative amendment, expanding the choices of trades and courses, in particular the provision of part-time arrangement for the popular "Vocational Skills" courses, and offering more training places based on demand. The measures will involve about \$350 million; and

(9) Enhance the Youth Employment and Training Programme to assist young people to enter the labour market. This will involve about \$14.3 million and benefit about 600 young people each year.

The above measures by the Government and SFC involve over \$4 billion in total.

Moreover, the Lands Department will introduce the following additional support measures for most of the short-term tenancies (STTs) of government land and short term and temporary waivers for varying the terms of the land grants under the Department issued for community and business use:

(i) freeze the rent and waiver fee payable under the STTs/waivers from October 1, 2019, until December 31, 2020; and

(ii) suspend re-tendering of the STTs from October 1, 2019, until 31 December 31, 2020, to allow the existing tenants to stay on under existing terms, unless termination is required for other policy considerations or initiated by the tenants themselves;

For stalls/facilities/carparks in the Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Food Market and Western Wholesale Food Market managed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, as well as Public Cargo Working Areas managed by the Marine Department, any monthly rental/fee increase as a result of the rental review conducted between October 1, 2019, and December 31, 2020, or according to the Berth Licence Agreements, will be waived until the next review or adjustment cycle.

Relevant bureaux and departments will follow up on the implementation of the above measures at full speed so that enterprises and the public can benefit early.

For the helping measures announced between August and October 2019 requiring additional resources (Note 2) in the current financial year, the

Government has consulted the relevant Panels of the Legislative Council (LegCo), and put up the funding proposals to the Finance Committee on November 29. As regards the enhanced tax concession, the bill for effecting the tax concession was passed by LegCo on November 6, 2019, and gazetted on November 15, 2019. The Inland Revenue Department will reflect the tax reductions in the tax demand notes.

Note 1: For four-monthly billed households, the respective caps for water and sewage charges are \$80,000 and \$50,000.

Note 2: Helping measures requiring approval for additional resources –

(i) making further enhancements and additional injections to the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales and the SME Export Marketing Fund, and introducing a new loan scheme with a 90 per cent guarantee under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme;

(ii) providing an extra allowance to social security recipients, equal to one month of the standard rate Comprehensive Social Security Assistance payments, Old Age Allowance, Old Age Living Allowance or Disability Allowance and applying similar arrangements to recipients of the Working Family Allowance and the individual based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy;

(iii) providing a subsidy to kindergarten and primary and secondary day-school students in Hong Kong at \$2,500 per head in the 2019/20 school year to alleviate parents' financial burden by defraying education expenses;

(iv) paying one month's rent for lower income tenants living in the public rental units of the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society; and

(v) providing a one-off electricity charges subsidy of \$2,000 to each residential electricity account.

Elderly reminded to take precautionary measures during cold spell

Attention Duty Announcers, Radio and TV Stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals:

With the approach of cold weather, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) reminds the elderly to take precautionary measures during the cold spell. Relatives, friends and neighbours are encouraged to show concern and care for the health of frail elderly persons, particularly those living alone. Those

in need may call the SWD hotline at 2343 2255 for assistance.