

Government urges employers to show understanding and flexibility in work arrangements of employees due to traffic conditions

The Government today (November 21) urged employers to make flexible work arrangements for staff to return to work having regard to traffic and road conditions occurring during the day. This will help maintain good labour-management relations and ensure the safety of employees and the smooth operations of establishments.

"For staff who cannot report for duty on time on account of conditions in road traffic or public transport services, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly," a Government spokesman said.

"The Government will similarly handle government employees in such situations with understanding. For staff who are unable to report to work on time because of traffic problems, they should inform their immediate supervisors as soon as possible and their departments will handle the cases flexibly."

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (November 21) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

TD appeals to public to pay attention to latest traffic situation

The Transport Department (TD) today (November 21) appealed to members of the public to pay attention to the traffic situation and the latest public transport service arrangement this morning before starting their journey.

As at 6am today, the latest public transport situation is as follows:

(I) MTR

All MTR lines maintain services today. Except the Airport Express Line, the train service will end at 11pm.

Hung Hom and University stations are closed. Entrances/Exits at some stations will also be closed. Train services may be suspended or adjusted due to incidents. Members of the public are advised to continue to stay tuned to the latest traffic news.

From start of service, East Rail Line service will be provided between Mong Kok East and Lo Wu/Lok Ma Chau stations (not stopping at University Station). West Rail Line service will end at East Tsim Sha Tsui Station. Free shuttle bus service running between Tai Po Market and Kam Sheung Road stations will be arranged during morning and evening peak periods.

Yuen Long Station of West Rail Line will be temporarily closed starting from 2pm and train will not stop at Yuen Long Station.

Light Rail Route 751P is substituted by Route 706. Routes 614, 614P, 751 and 761P will be diverted. Route 751 will not stop at Chestwood and Yau Oi stops.

(II) Hung Hom Cross Harbour Tunnel

Due to the damage to the facilities of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT), the tunnel cannot be reopened within a short period of time. To assist members of the public to commute, the TD has co-ordinated with franchised bus and ferry operators to strengthen services. Eight routes operating via the CHT have been rerouted to the Eastern Harbour Crossing (EHC) or the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHC). The routes via the EHC include 101X, 108, 111, 115, 116, 118 and 182 while the route via the WHC includes 118P.

Special free ferry services include the following two routes:

(1) Between Hung Hom (South) Ferry Pier and Wan Chai Public Pier (near Golden Bauhinia Square); and

(2) Between Ma Tau Kok Public Pier in Kowloon City and Wan Chai Public Pier (near Golden Bauhinia Square).

The service hours of the two routes are from 7am to 7pm with a headway of 30 minutes during peak hours. In view of the limited carrying capacity of the ferry services and to provide alternative for passengers, franchised bus operators will arrange special departures (Route 115) at Kowloon City Ferry Pier Bus Terminus via the EHC to Central.

(III) Major affected road sections

Major roads in Yau Tsim Mong District are yet to be reopened. Some bus routes may be temporarily diverted or suspended. The major affected road sections include Chatham Road South between Observatory Road and Gascoigne Road (both bounds) and Hong Chong Road (both bounds). Police will implement road closure, traffic control and diversion measures depending on the traffic conditions on site.

As traffic conditions and railway services may change within a short period of time, the TD urges commuters using public transport services to allow more travelling time and plan their journey in advance. Details of the latest traffic news are available at TD's website (www.td.gov.hk/en/home/index.html) or mobile application "HKeMobility".

SWD urges public not to take children/family members to care centres today

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

"The Social Welfare Department announces that as there are still uncertain factors affecting the roads and traffic conditions, members of the public are advised not to take their children or family members to child care centres, centres providing after school care programmes, elderly services centres or day rehabilitation units including sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres and day activity centres today (November 21). These centres will, however, remain open during their normal operating hours to serve those whose families cannot provide alternative care for them. Members of the public who have the need for the services mentioned may contact the service units concerned in advance."

Transcript of remarks by SCMA on District Council Ordinary Election

Following is the English portion of the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, at a stand-up session at LegCo Complex today (November 20):

Reporter: On what has happened today, that is the traffic congestion, do you see that the chance of holding the election will be further reduced? At which point the government will decide to postpone the election? Secondly, following up on the case of Simon Cheng (former employee of the British consulate in Hong Kong who reportedly has been tortured on the Mainland), how will the government follow up the case with the Mainland authorities?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: Regarding the first question, as I have said before, we are committed to conducting the polling as scheduled on November 24. We do not want to see the postponement or adjournment of the polling unless absolutely necessary. Therefore, we are doing everything we can and make necessary contingency planning and arrangements to achieve this objective. What has happened this morning, such as traffic disruption, blocking the screen doors and making delays in the MTR or blocking roads, causing delays and inconvenience to people who are going to work or to school. If that happens on the polling day, that might affect the opening of the polling stations on time which will have a material impact on the smooth conduct of the polling. Traffic blockage could make adverse impact on the smooth conduct of the polling. That's why I appeal to the public, especially those protesters, "when you express your views and opinion, please do not affect the right of other people". I think we should air our views and opinion in a way that will not affect other people's right.

Regarding your second question, as I said if Hong Kong residents have any requests for our assistance, we will ask them to come forward and let us have the information so that we can follow up with the Mainland authorities in accordance with our established mechanism. In following up on these requests, we will, of course, follow the "one country, two systems" principle and we would certainly reflect the situation to the Mainland authorities and seek their assistance and follow-up. In any particular case, I will welcome those affected to come forward and provide us with information.

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