

# Compensation levels for work injuries and occupational diseases increased and list of medical appliances for pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma sufferers expanded

The levels of compensation for employees injured at work or suffering from prescribed occupational diseases under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (ECO) or family members of deceased employees, persons suffering from pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma or family members of persons who die as a result of these diseases, and persons suffering from occupational deafness, will be increased on April 26. The list of medical appliances applicable to sufferers of pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma will also be expanded on the same day.

The Legislative Council passed three resolutions on April 3 to increase the levels of 18 compensation items under the ECO, the Pneumoconiosis and Mesothelioma (Compensation) Ordinance (PMCO), and the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance (ODCO), and to expand the list of medical appliances under the PMCO. The amendments were gazetted today (April 12) and will become effective from April 26.

"Under the established mechanism, the levels of compensation under the ECO, the PMCO and the ODCO are adjusted every two years where appropriate. Adjustments for most compensation items, if required, are normally made in the light of wage movement as reflected by the Nominal Wage Index or the price movement as reflected by the Consumer Price Index (A) in the relevant period, whereas the levels of some compensation items are adjusted having regard to other relevant factors," a spokesman for the Labour Department (LD) said.

As a result of this adjustment, the levels of 18 compensation items under the three Ordinances will be increased by 4.34 per cent to 81.47 per cent (see details in the Appendix).

Moreover, the list of medical appliances applicable to sufferers of pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma under the PMCO will be expanded. Two new items will be added, namely the non-invasive positive pressure ventilation device (and a humidifier when used with the device) and accessories, as well as the sputum suction device and accessories. Under the PMCO, an eligible person who suffers from pneumoconiosis or mesothelioma is entitled to the reasonable expenses of the use or supply of medical appliances listed in the Ordinance.

"The increased levels of compensation and the expanded list of medical appliances will enhance the protection for employees injured at work or

sufferers of occupational diseases as well as family members of deceased employees or persons who die of work injuries or occupational diseases," the LD's spokesman added.