

Government departments underpin all-out efforts to cope with impacts of rainstorm

A Government spokesman said today (May 4) that persistent rainstorm has caused flooding and landslides in various areas of Hong Kong. The relevant government departments have responded promptly, making every effort to minimise the impacts of heavy rain.

The Drainage Services Department (DSD) has been maintaining close liaison with the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) and making advance arrangements and preparations. The department activated the Emergency Control Centre this morning and deployed emergency response teams to proactively inspect locations prone to flooding, including Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O areas. Various locations experienced flooding due to the heavy rainfall. Within a short period of time, the DSD mobilised about 70 emergency response teams, working closely with other works departments to handle flooding cases expeditiously. As the rainfall intensified, the DSD deployed additional manpower to handle the flooding cases and clear the drainage channels across the territory, involving over 160 emergency response teams comprising about 600 people. By 7.30pm, all 16 flooding cases, including 12 in Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O areas, had been resolved. All cases were successfully handled within one to two hours upon receipt of reports, and the affected roads have mostly resumed normal operation.

The Emergency Control Centre of the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) also started operation promptly after the HKO issued a landslide warning. By 7pm today, the GEO received a total of 15 reports of landslides in Sai Kung area. Inspections to the reported locations were immediately carried out and necessary slope emergency works were arranged. One of the landslide cases occurred in the Clearwater Bay Country Park above the Tseung Kwan O Stage II Restored Landfill. The Environmental Protection Department instantly deployed manpower and excavators to clear the debris and divert rainwater to nearby catchwaters or stormwater drains, thereby alleviating the flooding pressure in Tseung Kwan O.

Regarding the roads in Sai Kung district closed earlier today due to severe flooding, most of them were reopened in a short period of time and the traffic has resumed normal, attributable to the quick response of the DSD, the Transport Department (TD), the Highways Department (HyD), the Police, etc. The Emergency Transport Coordination Centre of the TD also escalated to a higher level to closely monitor the traffic conditions across the territory. It maintained close liaison with relevant government departments and public transport operators, and provided timely information to the public transport operators for appropriate operational arrangements. Under weather-permitting and manageable risk situations, affected public transport services would be resumed as soon as possible, or the extent of service disruption was minimised, to provide essential services to members of the public.

The Emergency Control Centres of the HyD were activated after the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal was in force today to co-ordinate the handling of road emergencies, including clearing roadside gullies blocked by muddy water and debris and cordoning off some carriageways so as to facilitate emergency repair of the collapsed slopes in some areas in Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O where landslides and flooding occurred. At least one carriageway has been re-opened for public use.

In times of rainstorm warnings, the Fire Services Department by 7pm today handled 25 reports of Person Being Shut in Lift and 71 reports from automatic fire alarm systems. Fourteen persons were evacuated.

By 8pm today, the Government received 22 reports of fallen trees with no injuries.

The Government urges the public to stay away from slopes when landslip warnings are in effect or during heavy rain. Drivers should also avoid driving in hilly areas or parking their vehicles below slopes. Members of the public should stay away from trees and avoid stay under trees. Due to the inclement weather, there is a possibility of flash floods and landslides. The Government advises the public not to visit country parks.

In addition, the Home Affairs Department has opened nine temporary shelters located in Southern District on Hong Kong Island, Yau Tsim Mong and Kowloon City in Kowloon, and Tseung Kwan O and Sai Kung in the New Territories, for people in need. In Sai Kung, 12 District Services and Community Care Teams have been involved in the coping measures under the Red Rainstorm Warning, including Care Team members being on duty at the shelters to assist those in need.

Hong Kong is being affected by another band of intense thundery showers. The Government reminds the public to stay updated on the latest weather forecasts and traffic reports. The Government departments will continue to make every effort to carry out coping measures and relieving work, while Care Teams will continue to provide support to members of the public in need.