

Health risk category for Air Quality Health Index reaches "Serious" level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal air pollution levels since Tuesday afternoon (May 30). At 4pm today (May 31), the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at the Tung Chung general monitoring station reached 10+, corresponding to the "Serious" health risk category. According to the EPD's forecast, it is expected that the air pollution levels will still be higher than normal tomorrow (June 1).

Hong Kong continues to be affected by the outer subsiding air of Typhoon Mawar today. The weather is extremely hot and generally fine, leading to rapid formation of ozone and fine particulates in the Pearl River Delta region. Light winds are also unfavourable for pollutant dispersion.

The EPD expects higher than normal air pollution levels will remain until a few showers early next week.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" range or above, children, the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public are advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from healthcare professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows:
www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html .

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees, such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings on the EPD's website (www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.