

Labour Department encourages foreign domestic helpers to stay home on their rest day

The Labour Department (LD) today (January 30) appealed to foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to stay home on their rest day in order to safeguard their personal health and to reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community.

The spokesman said, "The response level under the 'Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance' has been raised to Emergency Response Level with effect from January 25. The public should refrain from gathering so as to minimise the risk of infection. The Government notes that the Philippine and Indonesian Consulates-General have also appealed to their nationals to take necessary health precautions and avoid large crowds or gatherings."

"The Government appeals to FDHs to stay home for rest on their rest day as far as possible, and to stay away from crowds on public transport or at public places. At the same time, employers must not require FDHs to work on their rest day. If it is necessary for FDHs to go out, they are advised to wear a surgical mask and to avoid staying in crowded places. If a FDH or his/her employer has visited the Mainland recently, he/she should wear a surgical mask and stay home for 14 days upon return to Hong Kong as far as possible," the spokesman continued.

LD appeals to employers to explain the special circumstances in discussing rest day arrangements with their FDHs and calls for mutual understanding. In particular, LD reminds that an employer who compels his/her FDH to work on a rest day is in breach of the Employment Ordinance and is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000.

For further health advice on the prevention of pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, please visit the website of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH) (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html) or call the DH's hotline (2125 1122). Information in Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu are also available at www.chp.gov.hk/en/other/submenu/424/index.html.

For enquiry on employment rights and benefits, please call the LD's 24-hour enquiry hotline at 2717 1771 (the hotline is manned by "1823"). Employers may also make reference to the press release on LD's appeal to employers to make arrangement to reduce the risk of the spread of novel coronavirus in the community (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/30/P2020013000285.htm).