

LD urges employers and employees to make work arrangements in times of tropical cyclones and rainstorms

As Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 (T8) will soon be in force, the Labour Department (LD) today (November 13) reminded employers to make work arrangements for employees during and after tropical cyclone warnings, rainstorm warnings and "extreme conditions", including arrangements on reporting for duty, release from work, resumption of work and remote work (if applicable).

An LD spokesman said, "In drawing up and implementing the work arrangements, apart from factors such as operational needs of establishments, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety and the feasibility of employees travelling to and from their workplaces. Employers should also give consideration as much as possible to the different situations faced by individual employees, such as their place of residence and the road and traffic conditions in the vicinity, and adopt a sympathetic and flexible approach with due regard to their actual difficulties and needs. For example, employers may permit employees who have difficulties in returning to workplaces to work remotely (if applicable) or allow more time for them to report for duty and resume work."

If the Government makes an "extreme conditions" announcement, apart from those required by employers to report for duty at workplaces, employees are advised to stay in the place they are currently in or in safe places when "extreme conditions" is in force, instead of heading for work. Employees who have already reported for duty at workplaces could continue to work as usual in a safe manner. If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release staff from work early under feasible conditions and in a safe manner, or make available a safe place as temporary shelter for employees. If the working time ends while "extreme conditions" is still in force, employers can release employees from workplaces in a safe manner or provide a suitable area as temporary shelter for those still at workplaces.

If it is necessary for employees to report for duty at workplaces under adverse weather or "extreme conditions", employers should work out arrangements for their transportation, safety, meals, rest places and more. If public transport services are suspended or limited when T8 or higher, or "extreme conditions" is in force, employers should provide safe transport services for employees travelling to and from workplaces, or grant them an extra travelling allowance.

The spokesman reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, Employees' Compensation Ordinance and Minimum Wage Ordinance.

The LD has published the "Code of Practice in Times of Adverse Weather and 'Extreme Conditions'", which provides the major principles, reference guidelines and information on relevant legislation on making work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees. The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).