

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 20) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (December 20). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Traffic along eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover

to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;
- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East;
- and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic diversions will be implemented from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;

- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.

Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged and its Dedicated Portion for implementing After-school Learning and Support Programmes open for new round of applications

The Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (PFD) managed by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) is inviting the 17th round Regular Portion applications and the 10th round Dedicated Portion applications for implementing After-school Learning and Support Programmes starting from today (December 20). Welfare non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and eligible primary and secondary schools can submit proposals from today to October 31, 2024. The PFD Secretariat will process and grant approval to the applications in two periods in accordance with the chronological order in which the applications are received.

The Government set up the PFD in 2005 to promote tripartite partnership among the welfare sector, business corporations and the Government for helping the disadvantaged. The Government provides matching grants with regard to the donations made by business partners to support welfare NGOs in running social welfare projects. Up till now the Government has injected a total of \$1.2 billion into the PFD, including \$800 million for the Regular Portion to help the disadvantaged and \$400 million for the Dedicated Portion.

Since its launch in 2015, the Dedicated Portion has been actively promoting the Government-Welfare Sector-Business-School collaboration to implement more after-school learning and support programmes for primary and secondary students from grassroots families to facilitate their whole-person development.

A spokesman for the SWD said that in the earlier 16 rounds of Regular Portion applications of the PFD, matching grants totalling over \$588 million were approved for 229 welfare NGOs to implement a total of 1 169 welfare projects sponsored by over 1 860 business organisations, benefitting around 1 013 000 disadvantaged persons. The first nine rounds of Dedicated Portion applications received a favourable response. Over \$339 million in matching grants have been approved for 552 after-school learning and support projects. Over 480 business organisations have participated in the projects, benefitting around 131 000 primary and secondary students.

For the new round of application, the ceiling of grants for each Regular Portion project is \$3 million and that for each Dedicated Portion project is \$4.5 million. Applications for the Regular Portion and the Dedicated Portion are open today. Details are as follows:

	The 17th Round Regular Portion Application	The 10th Round Dedicated Portion Application
Eligible applicants	Bona-fide charitable welfare NGOs having tax-exempt status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bona-fide charitable welfare NGOs having tax-exempt status under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112) • Public sector primary and secondary schools including government schools, aided schools and caput schools, and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme
Contents of the projects	Social welfare projects for the disadvantaged	After-school learning and support programmes for primary and secondary students from grassroots families
Application guides and forms	SWD homepage: www.swd.gov.hk/en/svcdesk/funds/partnership/	SWD homepage: www.swd.gov.hk/en/svcdesk/funds/dedicatedportion/
Application periods (Note)	Period 1: December 20, 2023, to May 31, 2024 Period 2: December 20, 2023, to October 31, 2024	Period 1: December 20, 2023, to April 30, 2024 Period 2: December 20, 2023, to October 31, 2024

Note: Applicants can submit proposals any time from today till the end of the first and the second application periods. The PFD Secretariat will process and grant approval to the applications in accordance with the chronological order in which the applications are received.

Details of the Regular Portion and the Dedicated Portion of the PFD are

available on the SWD homepage: www.swd.gov.hk. For enquiries about the applications, please contact the Secretariat of the PFD during office hours on 3468 2710 or 3468 2718, or by email to pfdengq@swd.gov.hk.

Red fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

The fire danger situation today (December 20) is red and fire risk is extreme. The countryside is extremely vulnerable to fire. If you are planning to spend the day in the countryside, please take pre-cooked food for a picnic and take all measures to prevent hill fires. The penalty for lighting fires illegally in the countryside is \$25,000 and a year's imprisonment.

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 20) reminded the public, particularly the elderly and people with chronic illnesses, to adopt appropriate measures to protect their health in view of the cold weather.

A spokesman for the CHP said that cold weather can easily trigger or exacerbate diseases, especially among the elderly and persons suffering from heart disease, respiratory illness or other chronic illnesses.

"Elderly people have less insulating fat beneath their skin to keep them warm and their body temperature control mechanism may be weaker. Their body may not be able to appropriately respond to the cold weather," the spokesman said.

Some senior persons may have decreased mobility, which can in turn impair their ability to generate and conserve body heat. Chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and endocrine disorders may undermine the health of elderly people and lower their metabolic rate, subsequently causing their body to generate less heat. Persons with chronic illnesses such as chronic respiratory illnesses or heart disease are vulnerable to disease aggravation due to cold weather.

The CHP reminded the public, in particular the elderly and persons with

chronic illnesses, to adopt the following preventive measures:

- Take note of the weather forecast. Wear warm clothing, including hats, scarves, gloves and socks accordingly;
- Consume sufficient food to ensure adequate calorie intake;
- Perform regular exercise to facilitate blood circulation and heat production;
- Stay in a warm environment and avoid prolonged outdoor exposure;
- Use heaters with care, and maintain adequate indoor ventilation; and
- Seek medical advice if feeling unwell.

In addition, the public should avoid alcoholic beverages.

"Drinking alcohol cannot keep you warm. Alcohol accelerates the loss of body heat through dilated blood vessels, resulting in chilling instead," the spokesman said.

"Parents should ensure that babies are sufficiently warm, but it is also important to keep babies relatively lightly clothed to avoid overheating them," the spokesman added.

Parents should observe the following safety measures when putting their children to bed:

- Keep the room well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature;
- Always place babies on their back to sleep. Leave their head, face and arms uncovered during sleep;
- Babies do not need pillows. Place babies on a firm and well-fitted mattress to sleep. Avoid soft objects, pillows and loose bedding;
- Let babies sleep in a cot placed in the parents' room and near their bed; and
- Maintain a smoke-free environment.

In addition, seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination early. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#).

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. Influenza vaccination may reduce the likelihood of hospitalisation and the length of stay. It is important for elderly persons, especially those residing in residential care homes, to receive both seasonal influenza vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination. They should also receive an additional booster against COVID-19 according to recommendations as soon as possible. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against respiratory illnesses and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Food-borne diseases, particularly those linked to hot pot cuisine, are also common in cold weather. The following preventive measures should be taken:

- Wash hands before handling and consuming food;
- Do not patronise unlicensed vendors or those with poor hygienic standards while selecting food;
- Wash and cook all food thoroughly;
- Vegetables should be washed thoroughly in clean running water before cooking and consumption. When appropriate, scrub vegetables with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances, including pesticide residues and contaminants, from the surface and crevices;
- Shrimps should be fully cooked until the shells turn red and the flesh turns white and opaque;
- For shellfish such as scallops and geoduck, scrub the shells thoroughly and remove internal organs;
- Most hot pot ingredients should be stored in a refrigerator at 4 degrees Celsius or below, while frozen food should be stored in a freezer at -18 degrees C or below;
- Never use raw eggs as a dipping sauce for hot pot; and
- Use different sets of chopsticks to handle raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.

In addition, when using fuel-burning appliances, especially in indoor areas, the public should ensure adequate ventilation to avoid harmful exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) and prevent CO poisoning.

For more health information, the public may call the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111) or visit the [CHP's website](#) and [Facebook](#)

[Fanpage](#).

The public may also call Dial-a-Weather (1878 200) or visit the [website of the Hong Kong Observatory](#) for the latest weather information and forecast, or its [page on Weather Information for Senior Citizens](#).