

# LD reminds employers and employees to take heat stroke preventive measures in times of Heat Stress at Work Warning

As the Heat Stress at Work Warning is now in effect, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate measures during the effective period of the warning to prevent heat stroke when working in hot weather or hot environments.

Employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor environments face high levels of heat stress and are at a relatively higher risk of heat stroke. Employers should assess the risk factors of heat stress for employees at work and, based on the identified risk factors, take necessary preventive and control measures, including rescheduling work periods, setting up shading covers, providing ventilation and heat dissipation equipment, and reminding employees to replenish water and rest in a timely manner.

The Heat Stress at Work Warning is formulated by the LD based on the Hong Kong Heat Index. There are three levels of the warning: Amber, Red and Black, which help employers and employees better understand the level of heat stress while working outdoors or indoors without air-conditioning systems.

A spokesman for the LD said that when the department issues the Heat Stress at Work Warning, employers must refer to the criteria and recommendations provided in the "[Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work](#)" to conduct risk assessments, according to the workloads and other relevant heat stress risk factors, for employees who work outdoors or in non-air-conditioned indoor workplaces. Appropriate rest breaks should be arranged every hour, as far as reasonably practicable, based on various levels of the Heat Stress at Work Warning, to reduce employees' risk of heat stroke.

Employees must also follow instructions to rest on time. Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as headache, dizziness, thirst, and nausea, they should rest in a cool and shady place, drink water, and inform employers/supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD issued the "Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work", detailing the various risk factors that should be considered when conducting heat stress risk assessments and recommending corresponding control measures for identified risk factors for employers' and employees' reference. For the Heat Stress at Work Warning and related guidelines, please refer to the department's thematic webpage:

[www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news/prevention\\_of\\_heat\\_stroke\\_at\\_work.htm](http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/news/prevention_of_heat_stroke_at_work.htm).

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## Warning

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## Very Hot Weather Warning issued

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

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## CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (June 21) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"Infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, those with chronic illnesses such as heart disease or high blood pressure, outdoor/manual

workers, and individuals who are overweight are more vulnerable to heat stroke. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon, if possible;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;
- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day if feasible. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

â€‹The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15, preferably higher. Reapply every two hours if you stay out in the sun, and after swimming, sweating or towelling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

â€‹If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

â€‹The public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.

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## KWH updates on electricity supply system interruption incident

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) made the following update today (June 20) regarding the electricity supply system interruption incident yesterday (June 19):

After the interruption of electricity supply system interruption yesterday, the hospital had immediately arranged contractor to repair the electricity supply system and investigate the incident overnight. The contractor today has replaced the malfunction components in the system and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department is now conducting independent testing, with a view to assure the electricity supply system to be safe and stable after repair. It is expected that the previously affected elective surgery services will be gradually resumed tomorrow (June 21).

The spokesperson for KWH stated, "Preliminary investigation by the contractor who installed the electricity supply system revealed that there was a malfunction of the control components in the uninterrupted power supply system which is the third tier backup power supply source and this malfunction affected the operation of the third tier backup power supply system in the operating theatres."

The spokesperson added that though the first tier power supply system and the second tier backup generators in the hospital were functioning normally, the hospital still decided to temporarily suspend operation of eight operating theatres for a comprehensive check up and system repair works, as a precautionary measure. The uninterrupted power supply system is the third tier backup power supply source of the operating theatres. When there were failures in the first and the second tier power supply simultaneity, it will be acting as a backup power supply to maintain operation of the essential medical equipment. Affected by the incident, 23 elective surgeries originally scheduled for today needed to be postponed and two elective surgeries needed to be transferred to another unaffected operating theatres. The two surgeries were both performed uneventfully.

During the interruption of electricity supply yesterday, one ongoing surgery was needed to transfer to another unaffected operating theatre. Doctor discovered today that one surgical wound on the patient was found having leakage. After clinical examinations, the condition was confirmed to be a known complication of that surgery and the changing of the operating theatres did not affect the patient's condition. Doctors performed another operation to manage the patient's surgical wound and had explain to the patient's relatives.

The spokesperson said, "KWH has instructed the contractor to repair the electricity supply system as soon as possible, so as to resume normal power supply in the hospital. The Hospital Authority has requested the contractor to perform full investigation and submit report. If necessary, the Hospital Authority will seriously claim liability against the contractors in accordance with the terms of the contract."

Safety of patients is KWH's utmost concern. The hospital will adopt all feasible measures to resume the normal operation of the elective surgery of the operating theatres as soon as possible. All other clinical services in the hospital, including emergency surgery, inpatient services and Accident and Emergency service remained unaffected.

KWH expressed apologies to the affected patients again. Investigation will be carried out to look into the incident. The hospital also invited relevant government departments to give advice so as to ensure the electricity supply system of the operating theatres to be safer and more stable.