

# 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 (July 17) 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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## [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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## [SED speaks on HKDSE examination \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, at a media session after her visit to Jockey Club Ti-I College to give encouragement to this year's candidates of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination today (July 17):

Reporter: Are there any factors that led to the increase of the number of top scorers in the examination this year? How effective is the Citizenship and Social Development subject given that it only requires students to pass the subject? Will you worry that students are studying half of the subject? Does it make it easier for students to achieve top scores?

Secretary for Education: For the C&S (Citizenship and Social Development) subject, we have standards-referenced reporting for assessment. The result doesn't mean that it is easier (for students to achieve good scores) than before. It's not comparable because this is a newly adapted curriculum. We appreciate very much the efforts of teachers and students and that they achieved good scores.

For the factors that led to the good performance this year, we have just finished the optimisation of four core subjects and we have created more space for our students to have the opportunities to choose one or two more elective subjects. They can explore their interests and abilities, and fully develop their potentials. I think this is why they got better results than last year.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)



## Transcript of remarks by SJ and SCED after LegCo Ante Chamber exchange session (with photos/video)

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, together with the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau; and the Commissioner for Belt and Road, Mr Nicholas Ho, met the media after attending the Ante Chamber exchange session at the Legislative Council this morning (July 17). Following is the transcript of remarks:

Reporter: Can you recap in English what you have discussed in the Ante Chamber? How will the Government do to increase its attractiveness and also its plan to get into RCEP?

Secretary for Justice: I try to summarise very quickly the gist of the discussion in the Ante Chamber. The focus today concerns the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), or to be more specific, how Hong Kong can participate in the BRI in a more proactive manner. We have invited colleagues from different bureaux, including the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and other colleagues. Among other things, I think the Central People's Government takes the views that Hong Kong, in future, should focus firstly on enhancing Hong Kong's role as a platform for providing professional services, for example, to serve as an international legal service centre. Secondly, to promote financial services and to enhance Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, in particular, in the area of green finance; and thirdly, to strengthen Hong Kong's status as an international cultural exchange centre, for example, to promote or expand the Belt and Road scholarship, which will benefit students or young people from countries belonging to the Belt and Road and to organise more cultural activities which could improve the mutual understanding between different cultures and between different people. As to more specific measures, perhaps I can invite Mr Yau to provide more details.

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: The Belt and Road Office is organising activities in co-ordination with the Central Government such as visits to the Belt and Road countries, taking enterprises and the professional services abroad and meeting different sectors to promote Hong Kong and our advantages. Under "one country, two systems", we have a very good setup in our legal system – we use the common law, the rule of law, free flow of capital. People from the Belt and Road countries would be very interested. Our professional services, such as legal, accountancy, architecture, innovation and technology, are all providing our advantages for people to look at. These visits would be able to expand our influence in those Belt and Road countries.

Regarding your question on RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership), we are working very hard with the RCEP members in getting their

support, and hopefully they will go through their normal process and give the accession as quickly as possible.

In the future, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau will work hard on improving the CEPA (Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement) arrangements with the Mainland, and seeking to the RCEP accession. The Belt and Road Office will again take the delegation overseas and lead them to engage with the Belt and Road countries' counterparts to promote the benefits and advantages of Hong Kong.

At the end of this month, the Chief Executive is leading a delegation to go to Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. The whole purpose is to foster closer connection with the new economies to promote Hong Kong and to provide more opportunities for enterprises and the professional services to go overseas. Thank you.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)



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## [LCQ11: Reimbursement of Maternity Leave Pay Scheme](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Chau Siu-chung and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

The Government launched the Reimbursement of Maternity Leave Pay Scheme (the Scheme) on April 1, 2021, through which employers can apply for reimbursement of the statutory maternity leave pay paid to employees in respect of the 11th to 14th weeks. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the numbers of applications under the Scheme in each of the past three

years and this year to date, and set out in Table 1 a breakdown by the monthly salaries of the employees involved and the respective percentages of the applications concerned;

Table 1

Monthly salary of employees involved	Number of applications (percentage)		
	2021	.....	This year to date
Below \$10,000			
\$10,000 to below \$20,000			
.....			
Above \$150,000			
Total			

(2) of the average processing time for the applications mentioned in (1) in each of the past three years and this year to date; among such cases, of the respective numbers (and percentages) of applications approved, rejected and withdrawn (set out in Table 2); the main reasons for rejection and withdrawal of the applications;

Table 2

Result of application	Number of applications (percentage)		
	2021	.....	This year to date
Approved			
Rejected			
Withdrawn			
Total			

(3) of the amounts reimbursed for the approved applications mentioned in (2) and distribution of the types of industries of the employers involved in each of the past three years and this year to date, as well as the respective percentages of the applications concerned (set out in Tables 3 and 4 respectively);

Table 3

Reimbursement amount	Number of applications approved (percentage)		
	2021	.....	This year to date
Below \$10,000			

\$10,000 to below \$20,000			
.....			
\$80,000			
Total			

Table 4

Type of industry of employers involved	Number of applications approved (percentage)		
	2021	.....	This year to date
Catering			
Construction			
Education services			
Finance			
Health services			
Hotel and accommodation			
Import/export			
Information and communications			
Insurance			
Manufacturing			
Professional service, administrative and other business support service activities			
Real estate			
Retail			
Social work activities			
Storage			
Transport, postal and courier services			
Wholesale			
Work within domestic households			
Other personal services			
Others			
Total			

(4) of the respective total reimbursement amounts involved in the approved applications mentioned in (2) in each of the past three years and this year

to date;

(5) as it is learnt that the authorities have appointed a private processing agent to assist in the implementation of the Scheme, of the respective expenditure on appointing the processing agent in the past three years and this year to date, as well as the manpower arranged by the processing agent for the Scheme; whether it has reviewed the effectiveness of the processing agent's assistance in the implementation of the Scheme; and

(6) whether it will consider stepping up publicity and promotion to enhance employers' or human resource practitioners' knowledge of the Scheme, so that more people can benefit from the Scheme?

Reply:

President,

The Labour Department (LD) has implemented the Reimbursement of Maternity Leave Pay Scheme since April 1, 2021. For the maternity leave pay (MLP) of the 11th to 14th weeks' maternity leave that is required to be paid to the employee under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57), employers may apply to the Scheme for reimbursement of MLP paid, subject to a cap of \$80,000 per employee.

The reply to the Member's question is set out below:

(1) Up to June 2024, a total of 25 105 applications have been received under the Scheme, with 6 127, 7 963, 7 367 and 3 648 applications received in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 (up to June) respectively. As employers are not required to provide the amount of monthly wages of employees on relevant application forms, the LD does not have breakdowns by monthly wage of employees involved.

(2) In general, employers receive the reimbursement within 15 working days upon submission of an application furnished with all the required information and documents. Breakdown by result of application is tabulated below:

Result of application	Number of applications (%)			
	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Up to June)
Approved	5 405 (98.2%)	7 480 (96.9%)	6 820 (94.7%)	3 507 (94.4%)
Rejected	6 (0.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.1%)	2 (0.1%)
Application withdrawn	91 (1.7%)	243 (3.1%)	375 (5.2%)	208 (5.6%)
Total	5 502 (100%)	7 723 (100%)	7 198 (100%)	3 717 (100%)



Note: Individual percentages may not add up to the total owing to rounding.

Applications were rejected mainly because the employee concerned had not been employed under a continuous contract for at least 40 weeks immediately before the commencement of maternity leave, i.e. the employee did not meet the eligibility criteria for MLP under the Employment Ordinance. The Scheme does not inquire employers about their reasons for withdrawing applications.

(3) Breakdown of approved applications by reimbursement amount is tabulated below:

Reimbursement amount	Number of applications approved (%)			
	2021	2022	2023	2024 (Up to June)
Below \$10,000	475 (8.8%)	580 (7.8%)	393 (5.8%)	165 (4.7%)
\$10,000 to below \$20,000	2 809 (52.0%)	3 670 (49.1%)	3 134 (46.0%)	1 586 (45.2%)
\$20,000 to below \$30,000	1 084 (20.1%)	1 566 (20.9%)	1 618 (23.7%)	821 (23.4%)
\$30,000 to below \$40,000	482 (8.9%)	742 (9.9%)	746 (10.9%)	418 (11.9%)
\$40,000 to below \$50,000	267 (4.9%)	447 (6.0%)	421 (6.2%)	218 (6.2%)
\$50,000 to below \$60,000	106 (2.0%)	194 (2.6%)	201 (2.9%)	128 (3.6%)
\$60,000 to below \$70,000	60 (1.1%)	100 (1.3%)	121 (1.8%)	56 (1.6%)
\$70,000 to below \$80,000	39 (0.7%)	55 (0.7%)	57 (0.8%)	21 (0.6%)
\$80,000	83 (1.5%)	126 (1.7%)	129 (1.9%)	94 (2.7%)
Total	5 405 (100%)	7 480 (100%)	6 820 (100%)	3 507 (100%)

Note: Individual percentages may not add up to the total owing to rounding.

The LD does not have breakdowns of approved applications by trade. Yet, according to our records, applications were mainly from employers of the financing, insurance, real estate and business services (21.6 per cent), import/export, wholesale and retail (21.1 per cent) and community, social and personal services (20.0 per cent) sectors.

(4) For the approved applications mentioned under (2), the Scheme has reimbursed \$545 million up to June 2024. The reimbursement amounts in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 (up to June) were \$118 million, \$173 million, \$166

million and \$88 million respectively.

(5) In the past three years, the total service contract value for engaging a processing agent (PA) by the LD to implement the Scheme was \$90 million. During the contract period, PA is responsible for the operation of the Scheme, which included setting up a service centre for the Scheme; developing, operating and maintaining the Disbursement Information System; processing and approving applications in accordance with the operation guidelines and requirements as prescribed by the LD; conducting quality assurance checks and internal audit checks; handling enquiries and complaints from the applicants; assisting in conducting publicity activities; and organising public engagement activities.

According to the service contract, PA is required to appoint at least three managerial personnel to assist in implementing the Scheme and to employ at least 39 staff members for handling various specified tasks under the Scheme.

The LD regularly conducts quality assurance checks, including performing random checks on PA's vetting records and related information, conducting on-site inspections and convening management meetings, for monitoring the performance and service effectiveness of PA.

(6) The LD has been promoting the Scheme through different channels such as broadcasting radio announcements in the public interest; placing advertisement; disseminating promotional messages through mobile applications, Internet platforms, the Reimbursement Easy Portal and the LD's homepage; as well as displaying posters and distributing leaflets.

Particularly for employers and human resources practitioners, in addition to organising briefings and workshops on details of the Scheme, the LD also places advertisements in publications of different chambers of commerce, employers' associations and organisations of human resources management to publicise the Scheme. The LD will continue to explore suitable promotional channels to further enhance the publicity efforts.