

# Government response on Labour Day processions

In response to the Labour Day processions today (May 1), a Government spokesman said that the Government would continue to listen to the views of employees, employers and other stakeholders, and take into account employees' interests and employers' affordability in formulating and implementing targeted labour policy initiatives for the protection of workers' rights and benefits and the enhancement of occupational safety and health (OSH) in various industries.

The spokesman said, "The Statutory Minimum Wage (SMW) rate has been raised to \$37.5 per hour with effect from today. Since the implementation of the SMW in 2011, the earnings of low-income workers recorded continued increases while total employment rose by over 300 000. The unemployment rate in the past year largely stayed at 2.8 per cent, the lowest level in more than 20 years.

"The Government has also embarked on preparatory work for abolishing the use of employers' mandatory contributions under the Mandatory Provident Fund System to offset severance payment and long service payment, including discussion with relevant stakeholders on the operational details for the abolition. It will strive to introduce the enabling bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) next year, with a view to securing passage by the LegCo by 2022.

"On improving other labour benefits, five-day statutory paternity leave came into force in this January. Meanwhile, the Government has commenced the drafting of the enabling legislation to extend statutory maternity leave from the current 10 weeks to 14 weeks, targeting to introduce the bill into the LegCo by the end of this year.

"To afford greater protection of employment rights and benefits for non-skilled workers employed by government service contractors, the Government has implemented a set of improvement measures from April, such as increasing the technical weighting in tender evaluation and the weighting of wage level as a criterion for technical assessment, and requiring contractors to provide contractual gratuities and other employment benefits."

On working hours policy, the spokesman said that having regard to the divergent views among different sectors of the community on legislative proposals relating to working hours and the absence of a broad-based consensus, the Government had decided to focus efforts on formulating working hours guidelines for 11 designated sectors, so as to improve the working hours arrangements for employees. "The Labour Department (LD) is formulating the working hours guidelines through its industry-based tripartite committees, setting out the proposed working hours arrangements, overtime compensation arrangements and good working hours management measures for

employers' reference and adoption. Enhancement measures have also been introduced to encourage employers to disclose more information on working hours arrangements when placing job vacancies through the LD," he said.

"The Government is also highly concerned about employees' OSH and will continue to strengthen its protection through inspection and enforcement, publicity and promotion, education and training. Having consulted relevant stakeholders on the preliminary amendment proposals for raising penalties in OSH legislation, the LD will refine the legislative amendment proposals after carefully analysing and studying the views received, with a view to completing the legislative amendment exercise within the current-term Government. The LD will also continue to encourage workers to lodge complaints against unsafe operations and promote the newly launched online complaint platform so that the LD can take prompt action to prevent accidents," the spokesman added.

---

## Update on measles cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (May 1) investigating a case of measles infection.

As at 4pm today, one case, which involves a 40-year-old man, was recorded. The man with good past health developed fever since April 25 and rash since April 29. He consulted a private doctor on April 26 and attended the Accident and Emergency Department at Queen Mary Hospital on April 28, 29 and 30 and was admitted for treatment on April 30. A laboratory test of his respiratory specimen was positive for the measles virus. He has been in a stable condition. The patient has not received measles vaccination. He had travelled to Zhuhai during the incubation period but had no travel history during the communicable period.

According to the patient, he did not have contact with measles patients during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far and have been put under medical surveillance.

Upon notification of the case, the CHP immediately commenced epidemiological investigations and conducted relevant contact tracing. Investigations are ongoing. The public places the patient visited during the communicable period are listed in the appendix.

"The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women

and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals," a spokesman for the DH advised.

Regarding measles control measures implemented at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), measles vaccination service at the airport vaccination station will be continued from tomorrow (May 2) to May 17 (excluding Sundays and public holidays). Measles vaccination will be provided to airport staff who:

- (1) Were born in or after 1967, and have not received two doses of measles vaccination, and have not been infected with measles before; or
- (2) Have laboratory evidence of testing not positive against measles antibody (IgG).

The vaccination quota for the measles vaccination station at the airport remains at 600 doses daily. The venue and operation hours of the airport vaccination station are as follows:

Venue:	Multi-function Room, HKIA Tower (Level 5, Terminal 2)
Hours:	May 2 to 17 (excluding Sundays and public holidays) 10am to 1pm 2pm to 6pm

As for the blood test service, the DH will continue to provide the measles serology test service to about 200 airport staff who were born in or after 1967 on May 2 and 7. The pilot service at the blood test station to provide measles serology testing for a total of about 200 Filipino foreign domestic helpers who are coming to or returning to work in Hong Kong will also be continued tomorrow and on May 7.

The venue and operation hours of the airport blood test station are as follows:

Venue:	South side before the Immigration Hall at Level 3 of Terminal 2 (non-restricted area)
Hours:	May 2 and 7 9am to 1pm

A hotline (2125 1122) has been set up for public enquiries and operates during office hours from Mondays to Fridays. A total of 3 309 enquiries have been received so far.

---

## Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (April 30) detected a suspected illicit cigarettes smuggling case by cross-boundary private car at Shenzhen Bay Control Point. A total of about 20 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$50,000 and a duty potential of about \$40,000 were seized.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers intercepted an incoming private car at Shenzhen Bay Control Point and found the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes concealed in a total of five false compartments at the doors and the boot of the private car.

The 44-year-old male driver was arrested and the private car was detained. Investigation is ongoing.

Customs will continue its stringent enforcement against illicit cigarette activities at all control points.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying duty-not-paid tobacco commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to the Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



---

## Red flag hoisted at Chung Hom Kok 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 (May 1) that the Environmental Protection Department has classified the water quality at Chung Hom Kok Beach in Southern District as Grade 4, which means the beach is not suitable for swimming. The red flag has been hoisted. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach until further notice.

---

## Recruitment for Young Astronaut Training Camp starts

The 11th Young Astronaut Training Camp is now seeking new recruits. From now until May 31, local secondary schools are invited to nominate students to join the camp. Selected participants will attend a series of astronaut training programmes in the Mainland free of charge this summer to learn about space science, astronomy and China's achievements in aerospace development.

The nine-day training camp will run from July 27 to August 4. Participants will visit major aerospace and astronomical facilities such as Beijing Aerospace City and the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre. This year, the participants could also visit the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope launched in 2016 in Guizhou to gain an in-depth understanding of its applications in astronomy and aerospace.

In addition to these visits, participants will be able to meet aerospace experts and astronauts, and attend lectures on space science and technology. They will also participate in astronaut training activities including the wearing of spacesuits, a "space kitchen", psychological training, escape and survival training, and blood-redistribution adaptability training. Upon completion of the courses they will sit for an assessment and be presented with certificates.

The quota for the training camp is 30. Candidates should be full-time

students studying in Secondary 2 to Secondary 6 in the 2018/19 academic year, aged 12 or above, and be nominated by their respective schools. Each school can nominate no more than two students. There will be three rounds of selection including a quiz on astronomy and space science, a three-day pre-tour training camp and an interview. Candidates who achieve outstanding performance will be selected to join the camp.

The training camp is jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, the China Astronaut Research and Training Center and the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, in association with the Beijing-Hong Kong Academic Exchange Centre. The training camp is organised by the Hong Kong Space Museum and sponsored by the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce.

For details, please visit the Hong Kong Space Museum's website at [yatc.hk.space.museum](http://yatc.hk.space.museum) or call 2734 2711.