

Marine Department announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No.3 has been issued, the Marine Department reminds vessel owners, masters and persons-in-charge of vessels that they should take precautionary measures immediately and properly secure their vessels at safe locations.

In case of an accident, a report should be made immediately to the Vessel Traffic Centre at 2233 7801.

Make prior work arrangements for typhoons and rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (November 1) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff during and after typhoons and rainstorms.

"To avoid disputes and confusion, employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures during and after typhoons and rainstorms," an LD spokesman said.

"In working out and enforcing the arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety, both in the workplace and during their journeys to and from work, and adopt a flexible approach. Whenever possible, they should consult their staff."

The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- * Whether employees are required to report for duty when different typhoon signals or rainstorm warnings are issued;
- * When a typhoon signal or rainstorm warning is issued during working hours, whether employees will be released from work and, if so, the arrangements;
- * How wages and allowances will be calculated for staff who are required to report for duty, as well as those who are late for work or absent from work during typhoons and rainstorms;
- * For employees who are required to travel to and from workplaces during typhoons and rainstorms, whether transport facilities will be provided for them and, if so, the arrangements; and
- * The time for staff who have not reported for duty to resume work after a

typhoon signal or rainstorm warning is cancelled, and other relevant arrangements as well as contingency measures.

"Employers should make realistic assessments of the requirements for staff and require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather conditions. When weather conditions continue to worsen and public transport services are to be suspended shortly, employers should release their staff as soon as practicable.

"When a Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued during working hours, employers should release employees from work in stages as soon as practicable. To ensure the safety of employees and to enable them to arrive home before suspension of public transport services, employees who have mobility problems (for example, pregnant employees or those with physical disability), employees who rely on transport services which are prone to being affected by adverse weather conditions (for example, ferry services) for commuting to and from work, and those who work in or are living in remote areas (for example, outlying islands) should be given priority to leave. Other employees should be released later in stages according to their travelling distance or the time required for returning home.

"If possible, employers should provide transport services for employees who are still required to travel to and from workplaces when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, or give them a special travelling allowance as encouragement.

"As typhoons and rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, employers should not deduct wages of employees who are absent from or late for work because of inclement weather. Neither should employers dismiss an employee summarily based on these grounds," he said.

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

Employers should also note that they have an obligation to maintain a safe workplace for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

"If employees are required to work in times of typhoons and rainstorms, employers should ensure that the risks at work are properly controlled and reduced to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable," the spokesman said.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for death or injury incurred when employees are travelling by a direct route from their residence to their workplace, or from their workplace back to their residence after work, four hours before or after working hours on a day when Typhoon Signal No. 8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

To provide practical guidelines and samples of work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees, the LD has issued the booklet "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms". 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).

HAD's emergency hotline activated

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

Following the issuing of Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3, the Home Affairs Department has activated a round-the-clock hotline, 2835 1473, for public enquiries on the tropical cyclone.

Care centres remain open

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals:

"The Social Welfare Department has announced that while Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 has been issued, all child care centres, centres providing after school care programmes, elderly services centres and day rehabilitation units, including sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres and day activity centres, remain open. However, if necessary, members of the public can contact the centres to make arrangements for the safe return home of their children and family members."

Transcript of remarks by SEN

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, on municipal solid waste (MSW) charging after

attending radio programmes this morning (November 1):

Reporter: Mr Wong, many people have expressed concerns about the increase in fly-tipping or illegal dumping once this waste charging scheme is implemented. How are you going to give the public confidence that this problem will be tackled and do you think there is a need to have better integration between the FEHD and the EPD to solve this problem?

Secretary for the Environment: As I said earlier, public education is the priority. Before the implementation of MSW charging, we will reach different key stakeholders through various means, including public education, community support and our outreaching teams. We will communicate with them so that they can understand more about MSW charging and do more on clean recycling. Certainly, we will adjust our resources to suit the enforcement plan in the future. Meanwhile, emphasis should be placed on publicity and education first.

Reporter: But is there enough co-operation between the EPD and the FEHD on this matter? Do you think there is a need to have a waste authority as suggested by some green groups?

Secretary for the Environment: As mentioned in our brief to the Legislative Council on MSW charging, in the future, we will set up an office to strengthen the collaboration among different departments in relations to this issue.

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