

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (September 28) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From September 21 to 27, the CHP recorded one imported DF case. The patient had been to the Philippines during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (September 27), 109 cases had been confirmed this year, 29 of which were local cases and 80 imported cases. The imported cases were mainly imported from Thailand (30), the Philippines (15) and Cambodia (nine). Since September 4, the number of local DF cases recorded this year has remained at 29.

DF remains endemic in some areas in Asia and beyond. In Guangdong, there were 378 cases recorded in the first eight months of this year. The latest figures for 2018 reveal that 2 087 cases have been recorded in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 126 in Japan. In Taiwan, 134 local cases have been recorded to date in 2018. In the Americas, the latest figures indicate that 32 744 cases have been filed in Mexico in 2018.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (DF) or at least 21 days (Zika virus infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#) for details.

Meetings of Legislative Council Committees

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Committees will hold six open meetings during the week from October 1 to 5 in the LegCo Complex. Details of the meetings are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to observe open meetings of LegCo Committees. Interested individuals and groups are advised to make advance booking of seats by calling the LegCo Secretariat at 3919 3399 during office hours. Members of the public can also listen to or watch all open meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website.

Fatal traffic accident in Lok Ma Chau

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Lok Ma Chau today (September 28) in which a 67-year-old woman died.

At about 7.36am, when a goods vehicle was approaching the goods vehicle holding area on Sham Road, Lok Ma Chau, it reportedly knocked down the 67-year-old woman who was crossing the road. The goods vehicle left the scene after the accident.

Sustaining head and abdomen injuries, the woman was certified dead at scene.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories North is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 3800 or 3661 3859.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (September 28) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches* that are open for swimming and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay**).

Seventeen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 16 as Fair (Grade 2) and six as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

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THE TOP SECRET BEACHES OF HONG KONG

Grade 2 beaches are:

Butterfly Beach
Cafeteria New Beach

Golden Beach
Hoi Mei Wan Beach

Cafeteria Old Beach	Kadoorie Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Pui O Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Shek O Beach***
Deep Water Bay Beach***	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Discovery Bay	Silverstrand Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Casam Beach
Approach Beach	Lido Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Ting Kau Beach

* The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced on September 17 that, due to urgent clearance work and maintenance of shark prevention nets after the Typhoon Mangkhut, all beaches in Southern, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Islands and Sai Kung Districts are temporarily closed until further notice.

** Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

*** After the typhoon, damage was found at Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works and some sewage pipes near Deep Water Bay and Tai Tau Chau at Shek O, leading to the discharge of sewage. The public are advised to avoid recreational activities at beaches including Kiu Tsui Beach, Trio Beach, Hap Mun Bay Beach, Deep Water Bay Beach and Shek O Beach where water quality may be affected in the near future.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.beachwq.gov.hk and www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Minimum Allowable Wage and food allowance for foreign domestic helpers

to increase

The Government announced today (September 28) that the Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) for foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong will be increased by 2.5 per cent, from \$4,410 to \$4,520 per month.

Under the Standard Employment Contract for hiring FDHs, employers are required to provide FDHs with food free of charge. At present, the vast majority of employers provide free food to FDHs. Employers may, however, choose to pay a food allowance in lieu. The food allowance will be increased by \$22 (or 2.1 per cent) from not less than \$1,053 to not less than \$1,075 per month.

The new levels of the MAW and the food allowance will apply to all FDH contracts signed on or after tomorrow (September 29).

A Government spokesman said, "The Government reviews the MAW for FDHs regularly. In accordance with the established practice, we have carefully considered Hong Kong's general economic and labour market conditions over the past year, as reflected through a basket of economic indicators, including the relevant income movement and price change in this year's review. The Government has also taken into account Hong Kong's near-term economic outlook, as well as affordability for employers on the one hand and the interests of FDHs on the other, in reaching the decision on the above-mentioned adjustment."

The spokesman added, "The Government has also reviewed the food allowance in lieu of free food, and decided to increase the allowance level."

FDH contracts signed today or earlier at the existing MAW of \$4,410 per month and with food allowance of not less than \$1,053 per month will still be processed by the Immigration Department (ImmD) provided that the applications reach ImmD on or before October 26 (Friday). This arrangement will give employers sufficient time to send the signed contracts to ImmD for completion of the necessary application procedures.