

# Employers and employees should take precautions against heat stroke

As the Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate precautions to prevent heat stroke when working in a hot or humid environment.

Heat stroke could occur if an employee works in a hot or humid environment for prolonged periods of time, as the body may fail to regulate its temperature by effective heat dissipation through sweating.

The early symptoms of heat stroke include feeling thirsty, fatigue, nausea and headache. Later, the victim may experience shortness of breath, rapid and weak pulse, dizziness, confusion or even loss of consciousness and convulsion.

For example, construction workers, cleaning workers, kitchen workers and porters are more prone to heat stroke when working for long hours in such an environment, especially if appropriate preventive measures have not been taken.

The LD reminds employers to arrange for a suitable assessment of the risk of heat stress in the work environment and take appropriate preventive measures. The LD has produced two leaflets entitled "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Construction Sites" and "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Outdoor Cleansing Workplaces" respectively. Employers engaged in construction or outdoor cleaning work are advised to refer to these checklists in assessing the risk of heat stress at their workplaces. As for heat stress assessment at a workplace in general, employers can refer to a booklet entitled "Risk Assessment for the Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" produced by the LD.

The LD also reminds employers and employees to take the following precautions to prevent heat stroke:

## Employers

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- (1) Take heed of the weather report and adopt shift work arrangements for employees to reduce their exposure to the hot environment, or arrange appropriate rest breaks for them during very hot periods;
- (2) Avoid working under direct sunlight and set up temporary sunshade wherever possible;
- (3) Provide cool potable water for employees at all times during work. If necessary, provide drinks containing minerals for employees to replenish loss of electrolytes during profuse sweating;
- (4) Minimise physical demands by using tools or mechanical aids at work;
- (5) Increase air flow by enhancing ventilation or air-conditioning as

appropriate;

(6) Isolate heat-generating facilities at the workplace and use insulating materials to minimise heat dissipation to the other work areas; and

(7) Provide relevant information and training for employees on heat stroke such as preventive measures and first aid treatment.

## Employees

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(1) Wear clothing made of suitable materials (for example, cotton) that is loose-fitting and light-coloured to help heat dissipation, minimise heat absorption and allow sweat evaporation;

(2) Wear a wide-brimmed hat when working outdoors;

(3) Drink plenty of water or other appropriate beverages to replenish the fluids and electrolytes lost through sweating; and

(4) Whenever there are any symptoms of heat stroke, inform supervisors and take appropriate actions immediately.

Some employees may have difficulty in adapting to a hot working environment owing to their own health conditions. Employers should take this into account and consider the recommendations of their doctors when assigning work to these employees.

In addition to the publications on risk assessment, the LD has produced a leaflet entitled "Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work in a Hot Environment" for the public. The publications can be obtained free of charge from the offices of the Occupational Health Service of the LD, or downloaded from the department's webpage at [www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2\\_9.htm](http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_9.htm).

The LD organises occupational health talks in public places and at its own training venues regularly to raise employers' and employees' awareness of occupational health. Details of health talks on the prevention of heat stroke at work in a hot environment in September are as follows:

Dates: September 24 (am) and September 27 (pm)

Time: Half-day

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour Department, 13/F, Kowloon Tsuen Wan I, 68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories

For enrolment or enquiries about these occupational health talks, please call 2852 4040 or 2361 8240 (for talks organised at the Occupational Safety and Health Centre). Moreover, the LD also provides an outreach health education service and occupational health nurses will, on invitation, disseminate occupational health information at workplaces at a convenient time. Please contact the nursing officer at 2852 4062 for details. All these health talks are free of charge.

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# Speech by CE at 2018 Hong Kong Green Finance Forum and Launch of the Hong Kong Green Finance Association (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the 2018 Hong Kong Green Finance Forum and Launch of the Hong Kong Green Finance Association today (September 21):

Deputy Director Qiu Hong (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Ms Qiu Hong), Laura (Chairman of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, Mrs Laura M Cha), Dr Ma (Chairman and President of the Hong Kong Green Finance Association, Dr Ma Jun), ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I'm pleased to join you today for the Hong Kong Green Finance Forum and the launch of the Hong Kong Green Finance Association. I would say that both the Forum and the launch of the Association are most timely, as Hong Kong is on the road to develop into a hub for green finance.

Coincidentally, coming to this landmark event this morning reminds me of something I have done exactly 10 years ago, and that is to support and facilitate the setting up of the Hong Kong Green Building Council. I am sure that there could be a lot of synergy between the Hong Kong Green Building Council, which is tasked to ensure energy efficiency in our built environment, with the Hong Kong Green Finance Association. If you need any help from me, Dr Ma, I am happy to be the connector.

It is not only about Hong Kong's development, but will also contribute to the development of our country. In his report delivered at the 19th National Congress in October last year, President Xi Jinping outlined the plan to speed up reform of the system for developing an ecological civilisation. He made it clear that the country will promote green development. In particular, the country will create a market-based system for green technology innovation, develop green finance, and spur the development of energy-saving and environmental protection industries as well as clean production and clean energy industries. The country's initiatives will create strong demand for green funding. Being China's international financial centre, Hong Kong is well positioned to offer the needed financial services, and capture the opportunities arising from it.

There is also a global dimension. The world made an important step forward with the 2015 Paris Agreement, adopted by 195 countries, which is also applicable to Hong Kong. The goals of the Paris Agreement, which include a two-degree limit on world temperature increases, are estimated to cost nearly US\$7 trillion a year globally between 2016 and 2030. Governments alone

can hardly hope to raise such sums. Which is why, in 2016, green finance was included for the first time on the agenda of the G20 Summit held in Hangzhou.

The strong demands for green funding and for green investment opportunities have led to the exponential growth in global green finance. In particular, the international green bond market has been flourishing. Governments, multilateral development banks and public entities worldwide have turned to green bond issuances. Indeed, the global aligned green bond issuance for the first half of this year rose 9 per cent, year-on-year, to about US\$77 billion. Of that, Mainland China represented 12 per cent, up an encouraging 14 per cent over the same period the previous year.

Hong Kong is ready to join the great green wave. Subject to the authorisation of our legislature, my Government will launch a green bond issuance programme with a borrowing ceiling of HK\$100 billion, making it among the largest sovereign green bond issuance programmes in the world.

In addition, we have launched the Green Bond Grant Scheme, which subsidises the costs issuers incur in obtaining certification under our Green Finance Certification Scheme. We have also put in place an enhanced Qualifying Debt Instrument scheme to spur market demand. It offers tax concessions for bond investment in Hong Kong.

I'm pleased to say that we're doing a bang-up business in bonds. In the first half of this year, 15 green bonds were issued here. Their aggregate size of US\$8 billion comes courtesy of a multitude of issuers, including multilateral agencies and private entities from around the world.

Our green finance profile is also looking good internationally. Hong Kong is a founding member centre of the G7-supported International Network of Financial Centres for Sustainability. The Network was launched last year and is a partnership between financial centres and the United Nations Environment Programme to exchange experience and take common action on shared priorities, with a view to accelerating the expansion of green and sustainable finance.

In June, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, in collaboration with the International Capital Market Association and the People's Bank of China, held two events on green bonds which gathered a total of 1 300 industry professionals and policymakers. Our Securities and Futures Commission and Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited have also been active in the global green finance scene, promoting market development through such initiatives as the United Nations Sustainable Stock Exchanges.

As Hong Kong is building momentum on green finance, we are glad to see the proactive initiative from over 90 market practitioners and business front-runners in launching the Hong Kong Green Finance Association. Indeed, the establishment of the Association marks another milestone in the development of Hong Kong as a green finance hub. It signifies the depth of our market for green finance and industry's commitment to putting Hong Kong on the world map as a green finance capital. Rest assured, my Government will support the Association and other local professional bodies in their work,

including in their collaboration with overseas counterparts in the promotion of green finance.

I wish the Association every success in the sustainable future. And I wish you all a very rewarding Forum today. Thank you very much.



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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 (September 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.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. 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 place additional demands on the

physique;

- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable, and start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Get into a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

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

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear loose long-sleeved clothing made of close-woven fabrics;
- Wear a wide brim hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming or sweating; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

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.

The public may get more information from the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather 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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## [Assess the risk of heat stroke to employees](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force, they should assess the risk of heat stroke to their employees and adopt effective preventive measures such as providing cool drinking water, setting up temporary sunshade and providing mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion of employees. Employees should drink water regularly and be mindful of their physical condition. If early heat stroke symptoms such as headache and thirst appear, they should inform their supervisors and seek medical help immediately.

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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.