

Public views invited for consultation on requiring drivers to stop after road accidents involving injury to dogs or cats

The Food and Health Bureau and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) jointly launched a public consultation on July 3, 2018, to invite views from the public on the proposed amendment to section 56(4) of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374) to require drivers to stop in the case of a road accident which causes injury to a dog or a cat. The Consultation will end on September 30, 2018. Public views are welcomed.

At present, the Ordinance provides that a driver of a vehicle shall stop if an accident involving that vehicle occurs whereby damage is caused to, amongst others, an animal other than an animal in or on that vehicle or a trailer drawn thereby, and provide his or her particulars to any police officer or any person having reasonable grounds. If the driver for any reason does not give the particulars mentioned above, the driver must report the accident in person at the nearest police station or to any police officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case not later than 24 hours after the accident. "Animal" is currently defined as any horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig or goat.

A spokesperson for the AFCD said, "The number of dogs and cats kept by the public has been increasing in recent years, and therefore the risk of dogs and cats getting injured in traffic accidents has also gone up. However, since dogs and cats are not covered by the Ordinance, drivers are not legally required to stop when they hit such animals. Public concern about animal welfare and health has been raised for cases in which the vehicle driver did not stop after an incident and left the scene without letting the animals receive attention.

"To better protect the health and welfare of cats and dogs, it is proposed that they shall be included in the definition of 'animal' in section 56 of the Ordinance."

Apart from cats and dogs, the Government also noted that there was opinion that wild animals, such as monkeys and wild pigs, should also be included in the legislation concerned to step up protection for them. The Government is open to this proposal and will take into account the comments received from this consultation exercise when making the final legislative proposal.

The consultation paper can be downloaded from the websites of the AFCD (www.pets.gov.hk/english/highlights/highlights.html) or the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/residents/government/publication/consultation/current.htm). Views on the consultation paper should be sent by post to the Office of the

AFCD, 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Hong Kong, by fax to 2728 3182, or by email to amdd_aws@afcd.gov.hk on or before September 30, 2018.

Update on cluster of Rhinovirus cases in Siu Lam Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with Rhinovirus in a male ward for severe intellectual disability, the spokesperson for Siu Lam Hospital gave the following update today (September 5):

One more 47-year-old patient in the ward presented with respiratory symptoms. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patient and the test results were positive for Rhinovirus. The patient concerned is being treated under isolation with stable condition.

Admission to the ward has been suspended and restricted visiting has been imposed. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Postal services to Japan subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (September 5) that, as advised by the postal administration of Japan, due to the impact of Typhoon Jebi, mail delivery services (including Speedpost, parcels and letter post items) to the prefectures of Ehime, Hiroshima, Hyogo (including Kobe), Kagawa, Kochi, Kyoto, Nara, Okayama, Osaka, Shiga, Shimane, Tokushima, Tottori, Wakayama and Yamaguchi with postcodes from 5200000 to 7999999 are subject to delay.

Property owner fined over \$60,000 for not complying with removal order

A property owner was fined \$60,800 for failing to comply with a removal order issued under the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) (BO) at Eastern Magistrates' Courts last week.

The order involved an illegal structure at the roof of a domestic building at Quarry Bay Street, Hong Kong. The illegal structure was used for habitation and was around 21 square metres in size. As the unauthorised building works (UBWs) were erected without prior approval from the Buildings Department (BD), contravening the BO, a removal order was served on the owner of the premises under section 24(1) of the BO.

As the owner repeatedly gave excuses and failed to remove the UBWs upon the expiry of the removal order, she was prosecuted by the BD. The owner was convicted at Eastern Magistrates' Courts on August 30.

"UBWs may adversely affect the structural and fire safety of a building, leading to serious consequences. Owners should seek professional advice before carrying out any building works in their premises," a spokesman for the BD said today (September 5).

Pursuant to section 40(1BA) of the BO, any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with an order served on him under section 24(1) of the BO, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of \$200,000 and to imprisonment for one year, as well as a further fine of \$20,000 for each day that the offence has continued.

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

- (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

- (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.

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:

(A)

Dates: September 13 and 24 (am)

September 5, 20 and 27 (pm)

Time: Half-day

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

(B)

Date: September 14

Time: 3pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Activity Room I, Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

(Opposite Victoria Park, MTR Tin Hau Station Exit B)

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.