

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, August 6, 2018 is 104.2 (up 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, August 4, 2018 was 104.1 (down 0.5 against last Friday's index).

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 6) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From July 29 to August 4, three community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 51 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Tower 2, The Metropolis Residence, 9 Metropolis Drive, Kowloon City;
2. A male patient, aged 53 with underlying illnesses, who lives in Toa Yuen House, Chuk Yuen (North) Estate, 8 Wing Chuk Street, Wong Tai Sin; and
3. A male patient, aged 58 with good past health, who lives in Man Wo Garden Mansion, 38 Yuet Wah Street, Kwun Tong.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of August 4, 51 LD cases have been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous

environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2- μm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and

4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Temporary traffic arrangements for tram track renewal works in Western District from next Monday

The Transport Department (TD) today (August 6) reminded the public that to facilitate tram track renewal work at Connaught Road West, parts of the fast lane of Connaught Road West westbound near Wing Lok Street will be temporarily closed from about 10am next Monday (August 13) to 10am on August 27 (Monday).

Appropriate traffic signs and road markings will be erected on-site to guide motorists.

The TD anticipates that the traffic in the vicinity of the above road sections will be relatively busy. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience in case of traffic congestion. Members of the public are advised to stay alert to the latest traffic news or the department's website (www.td.gov.hk).

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 August to September are as follows:

(A)

Dates: August 13 and 30 and September 13 and 24 (am)

August 8 and 22 and 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)

Dates: August 10 and 20

Time: Half-day, morning

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Centre of the Labour Department, G/F, Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong (MTR Kwun Tong Station Exit A1)

(C)

Date: August 13

Time: 3pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station Exit E)

(D)

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.

Labour Department enhances Youth Employment and Training Programme to promote youth employment

The Labour Department (LD) will expand the scope of the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) in September to cover part-time on-the-job training and raise the ceiling of the monthly on-the-job training allowance. The aim is to encourage employers to hire young people and provide them with quality on-the-job training with a view to promoting youth employment.

Under the enhanced programme, the scope of paid on-the-job training, which lasts for six to 12 months, will be expanded from full-time employment only (i.e. no less than 30 working hours per week) to cover part-time jobs as well (i.e. 18 to under 30 working hours per week), with effect from September 1, in order to meet the needs of some young people who are more interested in taking up part-time jobs.

In addition, to encourage employers to provide different kinds of on-the-job training positions to offer young job seekers more choices, the maximum monthly on-the-job training allowance payable to employers, who engage young people in paid full-time or part-time on-the-job training through YETP, will be increased from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per trainee employed. The revised on-the-job training allowance will be 50 per cent of the trainee's monthly salary, subject to a ceiling of \$4,000 per month, payable for a period of six to 12 months.

The YETP provides a comprehensive job search platform with one-stop and diversified pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. The programme enables young people to better understand themselves and their work aptitudes while enriching their job skills and experience for better employability in future.

Enrolment in the YETP is free of charge and on a year-round basis, without any minimum academic qualification requirements. The services provided by the YETP include pre-employment training, one-month workplace attachment training, on-the-job salaried training for six to 12 months, off-the-job vocational training allowance, as well as 12-month case management services provided by registered social workers. Trainees will be provided with personalised career guidance, job search assistance and employment support. All eligible young people are welcome to apply.

To showcase the improvement of trainees after joining the YETP and commend training bodies and employers for their caring efforts, the LD will, in collaboration with Radio 2 of Radio Television Hong Kong, hold the Award Ceremony of YETP Most Improved Trainees cum Concert "Solar Project 2018 – Dream Journey with YETP" at Queen Elizabeth Stadium at 7.30 pm on August 23. Music bands and pop singers will perform in the show and deliver supportive messages to youth, and in particular give encouragement to secondary school leavers to overcome challenges in pursuit of their dreams.

Young people who would like to join the programme or obtain free tickets for the concert may visit YETP's website at www.yes.labour.gov.hk. The LD has also set up a Youth Employment Services hotline 2112 9932 to provide a one-stop enquiry service on the programme and receive training vacancies from interested employers.