

Flag-raising ceremony cancelled

Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-raising ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 8am today (July 3) will be cancelled.

Hong Kong dragon boats race in Berlin waters (with photos)

For the fifth consecutive year, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin) supported the annual Berlin City Cup in dragon boat races on June 30 and July 1 (Berlin time) at the Olympic Regatta Course in Berlin-Grünau.

More than 70 teams across Germany competed in different race categories. Sports fans and families enjoyed the annual dragon boat-themed tug of war as well as culinary and musical highlights alongside the thrilling competition on the water. The Director of HKETO Berlin, Ms Betty Ho, presented trophies to the winning teams on June 30 (Berlin time).

The Office also hosted a booth to promote Hong Kong to visitors and athletes, especially the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival where thousands of spectators cheer for more than 5 000 athletes at the famous Victoria Harbour every year. The three-day festival in Hong Kong has developed into one of the biggest parties and water sport events in the world. With marching bands, entertainers, live music, food trucks and an artificial sand beach. It is the perfect time for visitors to come to Hong Kong to experience the city's vibrant culture and festive appeal.

The 2019 edition of the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival will be held from June 14 to 16 next year (Berlin time). Interested teams abroad can apply to join the international championships races, and experience first-hand vibrancy in Asia's World City.

About Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin

HKETO Berlin is the official Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government representative in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Germany as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland.



Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected ketamine (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 1 kilogram of suspected ketamine with an estimated market value of about \$500,000 at Hong Kong International Airport on June 30.

Two male passengers arrived in Hong Kong from Thailand on June 30. Upon examination of their luggage, Customs officers found four packs of suspected ketamine wrapped as snacks in their luggage. The two men were then arrested.

The arrested men, aged 34 and 19, have been jointly charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. They will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (July 3).

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment to be implemented on August 1 (with photo)

The Environmental Protection Department today (July 2) reminded members of the public that the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WPRS) will come into effect on August 1, 2018. The WPRS will cover air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors, which are collectively referred to as regulated electrical equipment (REE). The department also urged suppliers and sellers of REE to gear up for the implementation of the WPRS.

Starting August 1 this year, a consumer who purchases REE can ask the seller to arrange a free statutory removal service to dispose of an item of the same type. Under the arrangement, the designated collector by the seller will remove the waste equipment from a premises as requested by the consumer to a designated recycler for proper treatment. In addition, sellers will have to provide consumers with a recycling label in respect of each REE and a receipt showing the recycling levies, which serve to show that the purchased REE is distributed under the WPRS.

In addition to the free statutory removal service arranged by sellers with a purchase of new REE, members of the public, if necessary, can also call the EPD's recycling hotline 2676 8888 to arrange for collection service for abandoned REE provided by the operator of the Government's waste electrical and electronic equipment treatment and recycling facility, WEEE·PARK.

Furthermore, starting August 1 this year, an REE supplier must be registered with the EPD before distributing the above mentioned REE, while an

REE seller must have a removal service plan endorsed by the EPD for selling REE. An EPD spokesman reminded members of the trade concerned who have not yet applied to the EPD to act as soon as possible to ensure compliance with the relevant legal requirements when the law comes into effect. They can call the EPD hotline 2310 0223 for enquiries about the applications.

To prepare for the implementation of the WPRS, the EPD and the trade have jointly launched trial schemes since late last year to facilitate the trade and stakeholders to get prepared and familiarise themselves with the relevant operation. The EPD has also organised briefings for members of the trade and has met with trade associations to explain in detail the operation of the WPRS. The EPD with assistance of its appointed service provider has arranged staff to conduct follow-up contacts and shop visits, during which they brief members of the trade about the statutory requirements, and provide the latter with information packages, application forms and promotional materials. It has also been providing assistance to the sellers in completing the application forms, and remind them of the need to ensure compliance with the relevant legal requirements starting August 1 this year.

The control over the disposal, import and export of abandoned REE will come into effect on December 31, 2018. The EPD also urges those interested in obtaining the relevant licences to make applications as soon as possible.

The EPD will launch Announcements in the Public Interest of the WPRS on television and other online platforms tomorrow (July 3). Relevant information will also be advertised on radio and public transportation media platforms. Members of the public can also visit the dedicated website weee.gov.hk for details of the WPRS.



Make prior work arrangements for rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (July 2) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff in times of rainstorms as soon as possible.

"To avoid disputes and confusion, employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures in times of 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 rainstorm warnings are issued;
- * After a rainstorm warning is cancelled, the time for staff who have not reported for duty to resume work and the arrangements;
- * How wages and allowances (if any) will be calculated for staff who are required to report for duty and those who are late for work or absent from work during rainstorms; and
- * For employees who are required to travel to and from workplaces during rainstorms, whether transport facilities will be provided to them and, if so, the arrangements.

"Employers should make realistic assessments of the requirements for essential staff and require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather conditions. If an Amber, Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is issued during working hours, employees working indoors should remain on duty as usual and stay where they are unless it is dangerous to do so. Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should suspend outdoor duties as soon as practicable. They should arrange for their employees to take shelter temporarily and resume duty when weather conditions permit. When the Black Rainstorm Warning is issued, those employees should not resume duty until the warning is lowered and weather conditions permit. If the Black Rainstorm Warning remains in force at the end of working hours, for safety reasons, employers should provide employees with an area in the workplace as temporary shelter for them to stay if they want to.

"If possible, employers should provide transport services for employees who are still required to travel to and from workplaces when the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, or give them a special travelling allowance as encouragement.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work promptly

upon cancellation of a rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly.

"As 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 not deduct the annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days employees are entitled to under the Employment Ordinance so as to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from employees' failure to report for duty upon the announcement of a Black Rainstorm Warning. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with relevant provisions under the Employment Ordinance is liable to prosecution.

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 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 deaths or injuries incurred when employees are travelling by a direct route from their residences to workplaces, or from workplaces back to residences 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 code can be obtained from the branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).