

HAD to open temporary night heat shelters

â€‹The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (September 8) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall*
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre*
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Wah Kwai Community Centre
Wah Kwai Estate, Kellett Bay

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall*
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Sai Tso Wan Neighbourhood Community Centre
81 Cha Kwo Ling Road, Yau Tong

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall*
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre*
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung North Park (Zone B) Activity Room
29 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –
Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
King Lam Neighbourhood Community Centre
King Lam Estate, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

From September 1 to 30, the Home Affairs Department is running a pilot scheme to open five selected temporary night heat shelters (i.e. the above-mentioned five temporary night heat shelters marked with an asterisk) for people in need, regardless of whether the Very Hot Weather Warning has been issued by the Hong Kong Observatory.

For the 14 temporary night heat shelters not covered by the pilot scheme, their opening will still be subject to the issuing of the Very Hot Weather Warning. If the Very Hot Weather Warning remains in force at 4.30pm after being issued, the heat shelters will open from 10.30pm until 8am the next day. If the Very Hot Weather Warning is cancelled before 4.30pm, the heat shelters will not open overnight that day.

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community.

People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas of the designated community centres and community halls. For the addresses of these designated community centres and community halls, please browse the following document:

www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

LCQ20: Self-regulation of professional sectors

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (September 8):

Question:

Some members of the public have pointed out that a number of professionals such as counsels, solicitors, social workers and healthcare personnel have been convicted and sentenced for participating in unlawful activities during the occupation movement in 2014 or the movement of opposition to the proposed legislative amendments in 2019. However, it is seldom heard that the professional bodies concerned have taken disciplinary actions against such persons or cancelled their professional registrations or practising qualifications. Among such persons, an individual has even been elected a member of the registration board of his profession after serving his sentence. Such members of the public are of the view that the aforesaid situation reflects that individual professional bodies have failed to

discharge their duties and responsibilities under "professional autonomy" and "professional self-regulation" to eliminate the black sheep of their professions, thus undermining their own credibility and that of the professions concerned, as well as damaging the overall image of Hong Kong's professional sectors. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective numbers of counsels, solicitors, social workers and healthcare personnel convicted since 2014 for the commission of unlawful acts related to the occupation movement or the movement of opposition to the proposed legislative amendments and, among them, the number of those sentenced to imprisonment (including suspended sentences); if such information is unavailable, whether it will gather the relevant information expeditiously;

(2) whether it knows the details (including the progress and outcome of the disciplinary actions taken) of the follow-up actions taken by the professional bodies and registration boards concerned in respect of the cases mentioned in (1), and set out the information by profession; if such information is unavailable, whether it will expeditiously request the bodies concerned to provide the relevant information;

(3) of the roles and powers of the Government under the existing legislation in respect of regulating the aforesaid professional bodies and registration boards; and

(4) of the follow-up actions taken by the Government on the allegations that individual professional bodies have failed to discharge their duties and responsibilities of eliminating the black sheep of their professions?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is a society that upholds the rule of law. Any person or institution must abide by the law. In respect of professional bodies, they should, under the principle of not violating the law, operate effectively according to their objects, maintain the credibility and recognition of their own and their professions, foster the development of their professions, and tender their views on issues relating to their professions to the Government. If an individual body or its members are suspected of engaging in illegal activities, the law enforcement agencies will definitely pursue their legal liabilities.

With regard to the Member's question, a reply based on the information provided by the Department of Justice (DoJ), Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and Food and Health Bureau (FHB) is set out below:

(1) and (2) In terms of the overall statistics, in respect of the illegal occupy movement in 2014, the Police arrested a total of 1 003 persons. 225 persons were prosecuted of which 169 persons have to bear legal consequences

(including 127 persons who were convicted). As regards the illegal acts relating to the violent riots, as at July 31, 2021, the Police arrested 10 265 persons in total and 2 684 persons have been prosecuted. Among the 1 527 persons who have completed the judicial proceedings, 1 197 persons have to bear legal consequences (including 905 who were convicted).

The Government does not keep statistics on the different professionals who were convicted for violating the law. The arrest action by the Police is directed against the criminal act and has nothing to do with the background or occupation of the person(s) concerned. Likewise, the DoJ controls criminal prosecutions, which are based on an objective assessment of all admissible evidence and the applicable law. Prosecutions will not be conducted differently owing to the background or occupation of the persons involved. The Police and DoJ therefore do not maintain information on the occupation of the arrested persons.

In respect of social workers, the LWB indicates that according to the information provided by the Social Workers Registration Board, a total of eight registered social workers have been convicted since 2014 for their unlawful acts related to the illegal occupy movement or the violent riots, and all of them were sentenced to imprisonment (including suspended sentences). For follow-up actions of these eight persons, the Board implemented a disciplinary order of reprimanding one person in writing pursuant to Section 30(c) of the Social Workers Registration Ordinance; approved the applications for registration renewal of three persons; is deliberating on the cases of two persons; and is awaiting the remaining two persons to report the court's verdict on their appeals.

As for healthcare professionals, the FHB indicates that according to the information obtained from the statutory boards and councils of 13 healthcare professions, one occupational therapist and one physiotherapist were convicted for their unlawful acts related to the illegal occupy movement or the violent riots, and neither of them were sentenced to imprisonment. Insofar as follow-up actions are concerned, the Occupational Therapists Board has completed the handling of the concerned case in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures. After deliberation, the Board's Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) concluded that there was no professional misconduct and determined that no disciplinary inquiry or further follow-up action was required. Separately, the Physiotherapists Board is handling the concerned case according to the relevant statutory procedures. The case is under deliberation by the Board's PIC.

(3) and (4) Regulatory bodies of professionals are established in accordance with various ordinances and are responsible for regulating the registration and conduct, etc. of specific trades. Regulatory bodies must discharge their statutory functions in accordance with the relevant laws.

Insofar as the legal profession is concerned, according to DoJ, the conduct of solicitors and barristers is regulated by the relevant regulations applicable to their professional branches. Related matters should be handled under the existing self-regulatory regime for the legal profession in Hong

Kong.

Under the Legal Practitioners Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation, the Law Society of Hong Kong (Law Society) and the Hong Kong Bar Association (Bar Association) are the respective regulatory bodies of the solicitors' and barristers' branches. In particular, the Law Society and Bar Association are empowered by the Legal Practitioners Ordinance to make rules providing for the conduct and discipline of solicitors and barristers, and to submit a matter on a solicitor's or barrister's conduct to a Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal or a Barristers Disciplinary Tribunal respectively. An order for suspension or striking off the roll in relation to a solicitor or barrister shall be published in the Gazette in accordance with the Legal Practitioners Ordinance.

In respect of social workers, according to the information provided by LWB, the Social Workers Registration Board is a statutory body established under the Social Workers Registration Ordinance. The Social Workers Registration Ordinance empowers the Board to set and review the qualification standards for the registration of social workers, formulate and approve codes of practice, administer the registration system and handle disciplinary matters, including deciding whether persons convicted of criminal offences can be registered or continue to be registered as social workers.

As regards healthcare professionals, the FHB advises that there are currently 13 healthcare professions in Hong Kong which are subject to statutory registration, including doctors, dentists, dental hygienists, nurses, midwives, Chinese medicine practitioners, pharmacists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, medical laboratory technologists, optometrists, radiographers and chiropractors. These healthcare professions are subject to the regulation of respective ordinances and subsidiary legislation. A total of 13 statutory boards and councils were established under the law and are given the power to prescribe the registration requirements, handle and investigate complaints, and take disciplinary actions against registered healthcare professionals for violation of the regulations.

In conclusion, professionals are generally regulated by their regulatory bodies in accordance with the relevant laws. At the same time, the relevant policy bureaux will review the work of the regulatory bodies as necessary to ensure their effective operation. If regulatory bodies fail to discharge their statutory functions, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) will examine the case seriously and follow up in accordance with the actual circumstances.

The HKSAR Government emphasises that professional bodies should discharge their professional duties. If an individual body deviates from its objects of establishment, allowing its profession to be hijacked or overridden by politics, thereby resulting in apparent bias or dereliction of duties, the HKSAR Government will re-examine its relations with the relevant body and take appropriate follow-up measures, including ceasing the Government's relations with that body where absolutely necessary.

LCQ6: Improving taxi services

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (September 8):

Question:

Some members of the taxi trade have pointed out that in recent years, taxi business has been reeling from the double blows of economic downturns and the rampant activities of using private cars for illegal carriage of passengers for hire and reward (illegal carriage of passengers). As a result, taxi drivers have suffered a reduction of income, and service quality has been deteriorating. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that most of the taxi drivers place several mobile phones on the dashboard in order to use several online ride-hailing applications, whether the Government will stipulate that such applications may send taxi-hailing messages only to those taxis stopping and waiting for customers or empty taxis, so as to avoid taxi drivers being distracted while driving, thereby minimising traffic accidents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will study afresh the implementation of a premium taxi service scheme to enhance the quality of taxi service through means such as licensed taxis forming fleets, employing vehicles of new models with better facilities, and improving the remuneration and training for drivers, so that those members of the public who are willing to pay a higher fare can choose taxi service which is of higher quality and safer; if so, of the details and the timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will expedite the legislative work on raising the penalties for illegal carriage of passengers, and introduce new measures to step up efforts in combating such activities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Chan Han-pan is as follows:

The Government has always attached great importance to road safety, and has been ensuring the safety of road users through regulation by law and promoting attentive driving through education and publicity. At present, if a

motorist uses a mobile phone or other smart device while driving in such a way as to affect his driving, he may have committed the offence of "dangerous driving" or "careless driving", irrespective of whether his driving has caused a traffic accident. In addition, if a motor vehicle being driven by a motorist is in motion, it is an offence for the motorist to use a mobile phone by holding it in his hand or between his head and shoulder. The Road Users' Code has also issued clear guidelines to motorists that they should avoid using mobile phones or other smart devices as far as possible while driving, and should drive attentively.

The Government notes the public's concern about motorists, particularly taxi drivers, placing several mobile phones on the dashboard while driving. The Government also understands that motorists may have practical needs to use mobile phones or other devices for, for instance, obtaining information about navigation, real-time traffic conditions and parking space, etc. As to whether further restrictions should be imposed on the use or placement of mobile phones and other devices while driving, the first and foremost consideration is road safety while taking into account practical needs. The Transport Department (TD) is conducting a study and will consider the direction of regulating the number and location of mobile phone devices placed by motorists, as well as the mode of use and purpose of using the devices, etc., having regard to the technological development and changes in the usage habits of mobile phones and vehicle devices. To this end, the TD is making reference to the regulations and practices in other jurisdictions, observing the situation on usage of mobile phones and other devices on vehicles by motorists, and considering various factors such as whether motorists would switch between multiple mobile applications if restriction is imposed on the number of mobile phones placed on the dashboard while driving. Upon the formulation of concrete proposals, the Government will consult stakeholders in due course.

The Government has all along endorsed the general direction of centralising the management of taxi service quality through professional fleet management. We understand that currently some taxi operators are running taxi services as fleets, providing passengers with more spacious vehicle models and compartments equipped with free Wi-Fi and electronic payment systems, etc. They also provide various channels for passengers to make suggestions and lodge complaints on taxi services so as to monitor drivers' performance. In addition, some taxi operators have enhanced pre-service training for drivers, and will issue warning or provide training to drivers who have been involved in improper driving behaviour or bad service attitude. The TD has also collaborated with the Committee on Taxi Service Quality to organise the Taxi Service Commendation Scheme to recognise outstanding taxi drivers and taxi service management teams so as to continuously improve the professional image of taxi industry. The Government is also carefully examining different options on how to provide passengers with better taxi service quality through fleet management. In formulating the proposal, we will take into account the views on the Franchised Taxi Services Bill (the Bill) expressed earlier by the Bills Committee, the public and the taxi trade.

The Government introduced the Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in May 2019. The bill aimed to introduce franchised taxi services to meet the demand in the community for personalised and point-to-point public transport services of higher quality with "online-hailing" feature. However, the relevant Bills Committee decided to discontinue the scrutiny of the Bill in June 2020. Having regard to the economic situation at that time and the views of the Bills Committee, the Government considered that then was not an opportune time to introduce franchised taxis and withdrew the Bill in November 2020. The Government would review the franchised taxi proposal and the way forward in the light of public views and relevant circumstances.

The Government has been combating the illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by motor vehicles through enforcement as well as education and publicity.

The Police closely monitor the relevant illegal acts by collecting intelligence as well as conducting investigation and follow-up actions on complaint cases. Suitable actions will be taken should there be sufficient evidence. To strengthen the deterrent effect and enhance the safety protection for passengers and road users, the TD has conducted a review on the penalties for related offences, and undertaken consultation regarding proposals of raising the fine as well as lengthening the period for suspension of vehicle licence and impoundment of vehicles. The legislative amendment exercise is underway, which will be submitted by the Government to the LegCo for consideration in due course.

In addition, the TD has put in place a number of measures to further enhance public awareness of legal hire car services; and encourage members of the public to enquire with the service operators or make use of the TD's online checking system to check the vehicle permit before the journey starts.

Thank you, President.

LCQ11: Public Wi-Fi services provided in public hospitals

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (September 8):

Question:

At present, all public hospitals are installed with Wi-Fi.HK hotspots (hotspots) to provide members of the public with free public Wi-Fi services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the following information on the hotspots currently installed in various public hospitals (set out in a table): (i) the number of hotspots (and among them, the respective numbers of those using 2.4 and 5 GHz bands), (ii) the locations and (iii) the daily average usage;

(2) whether it knows the factors considered by the Hospital Authority (HA) when selecting locations in public hospitals for installing hotspots;

(3) given that hotspot signs have been put up near each hotspot in various public hospitals at present, whether the Government knows if HA has assessed, in respect of such signs, whether (i) their display positions are appropriate, and (ii) their numbers are sufficient; if HA has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it knows the cyber security measures adopted by HA for protecting the safety of Wi-Fi service users?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Innovation and Technology Bureau and the Hospital Authority (HA), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Pierre Chan is as follows:

(1) and (2) Through the "Wi-Fi Connected City" programme implemented by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), the HA invited telecommunications service operators to participate in the Public-Private Collaboration (PPC) arrangement to provide public access to free Wi-Fi service at the HA's public hospitals on a voluntary and self-funded basis. Currently free Wi-Fi service at 16 public hospitals are being provided by operators participating in the PPC arrangement. On the other hand, the OGCIO has funded the provision of free Wi-Fi service in 27 public hospitals. To enhance public access to the free Wi-Fi service, Wi-Fi.HK hotspots mainly cover public waiting areas of the public hospitals, including Accident & Emergency (A&E) departments, outpatient clinics, pharmacies and restaurants. A vast majority of the "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots in the aforesaid public hospitals support both the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequency bands. Details are set out in Annex.

(3) The HA and its operators had, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the OGCIO, put up signage of the hotspot icon near "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots in all participating venues under the "Wi-Fi Connected City" programme, so as to inform the public of the relevant services. Aside from that, details on the locations of all "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots have been uploaded to the "Wi-Fi.HK" website and "Wi-Fi.HK" mobile app.

(4) All service operators providing public Wi-Fi are required to follow the "Guidelines on the Security Aspects for the Design, Implementation, Management and Operation of Public Wi-Fi Service" issued by the Office of the

Communications Authority, as well as adhering to the related operational safety guidelines issued by the OGCI0. Aside from that, service operators have to adopt digital server certificates to enable Wi-Fi service users to verify the identity of the organisation that provides the service. A client isolation function has also been applied to free Wi-Fi services at government venues (including at public hospitals) to serve as another layer of safety precaution to reduce the risk and threats of attacks among users' devices connected to the Wi-Fi hotspots.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (September 8), six COVID-19 confirmed patients (case numbers: 12044, 12089, 12098, 12100, 12104 and 12105) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 11 831 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 576 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 077 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 51 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in eight public hospitals and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre and all of them are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.