

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, August 10, 2020 is 106.1 (same as last Saturday's index).

â€‹The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, August 8, 2020 was 106.1 (up 0.2 against last Friday's index).

EMSD announces test results of LPG quality in July 2020

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (August 10) announced that the department collected seven liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) samples from auto-LPG filling stations and LPG terminals on a random basis in July 2020 for laboratory tests. The results show that the LPG quality of all these samples complied with auto-LPG specifications.

The detailed test results are available on the EMSD's website (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/rl/lpg_sample_analysis_simple). Enquiries can also be made to the EMSD's hotline on 2333 3762.

In addition, the EMSD has been vetting independent third-party test reports submitted by LPG supply companies for each shipment to ensure that the quality of imported LPG complies with the specified requirements.

HA announces passing away of two COVID-19 patients

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority spokesperson today (August 10) announced the passing away of two patients confirmed with COVID-19 infection earlier this morning.

An 85-year-old male patient (case number: 3372) admitted to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital on July 31 due to fever and diarrhoea succumbed at 12.51am today.

An 86-year-old male patient with chronic illness (case number: 2793) admitted to Queen Mary Hospital on July 28 due to fever and vomiting succumbed at 6.41am today.

The hospitals concerned are saddened by the passing away of the patients and will offer necessary assistance to their family members.

Including the above two patients, 54 COVID-19 patients have passed away in public hospitals so far.

Trainee Programme to train arborists and tree climbers

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (August 10) that the Trainee Programme under the Urban Forestry Support Fund is open for application, with a view to encouraging employers to engage and train arboriculture and tree management graduates to become quality arborists and tree climbers to support tree management and maintenance work in Hong Kong.

"The arboriculture and horticulture industry is young and evolving. Young people lack stable jobs and training opportunities in the industry. The programme will enable arboriculture and tree management graduates to receive on-the-job training to acquire working experience, paving the way for qualified arborists and tree climbers in the future," a spokesman for the DEVB said.

The Trainee Programme is applicable to graduates of arboriculture, tree management and tree work programmes at Level 3 to Level 5 of the Qualifications Framework offered by local vocational, tertiary and training institutions. The programme will provide a training allowance of about 30 per cent of agreed monthly remuneration levels to the trainees through their employers, as well as a bonus of \$30,000 and \$20,000 upon their acquisition of recognised arborist or tree climber professional qualifications respectively. The training periods for arborist and tree climber trainees are three years and 18 months respectively.

"Eligible employers are invited to participate in the Trainee Programme to take in arborist and tree climber trainees at agreed or higher remuneration levels (including the training allowances provided under the programme). They are also required to provide structured training that meets stipulated requirements. Government tree management departments will also join the programme, working hand in hand with the industry to train arborists and tree climbers. It is expected that the programme will benefit around 100 arboriculture and tree management graduates each year," the spokesman said.

The Government has commissioned the Construction Industry Council (CIC) to administer the Trainee Programme. The programme accepts applications from employers throughout the year. The relevant application form and training framework document can be downloaded from the website of the CIC (www.cic.hk/ufsf-tp_e).

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 symptoms of heat-related illnesses include feeling thirsty, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, muscle spasm or even mental confusion, and loss of consciousness or convulsion in severe cases.

Construction workers, cleaning workers, kitchen workers and porters, for example, are more prone to heat stroke as they may be 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 electrolytes for employees to replenish loss of salt 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 with electrolytes to replenish the fluids and salt lost through sweating; and
- (4) Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, rest in a cool or shady place and drink water, and inform supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD also urges employers to provide for employees as far as practicable covered space with good ventilation for rest and meals. Furthermore, 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.

In view of the latest situation of COVID-19, occupational health talks on the prevention of heat stroke at work in a hot environment scheduled to be held in August have been temporarily cancelled until further notice.