

CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 27) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;

- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming, sweating or toweling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.

CHP investigates 128 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 0.00am, July 26, the CHP was investigating 128 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 2 634 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 2 633 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, 25 had travel history during the incubation period.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. As a number of recent cases involve elderly people, the CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with every day tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
 - When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.
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A male police officer preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19

A 48-year-old male police officer who is posted to Tuen Mun Division was preliminarily tested positive for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). He felt unwell on July 24 and sought medical treatment at a hospital. Preliminary results released today (July 26) showed that he was tested positive for COVID-19. He had no travel history over the past 14 days. He last attended work on July 24, and he wore masks when he had to come into contact with members of the public.

Police are highly concerned about the case and have the following message for members of the public:

1) While awaiting further assessment and recommendation by the Department of Health (DH), officers that might have come into close contact with the police officer have been arranged to work from home and undergo tests for the virus;

2) Police have deployed staff to clean and disinfect the Disciplined Services Quarters the police officer resides in, as well as the office he works in; and

3) Police have reminded officers to reduce social contact to minimise risks of infection, and pay attention to physical health. If feeling unwell, they should consult a doctor and report the case.

Police will continue to maintain close communication with DH and proactively provide information such as the recent duty record and roster of the police officer concerned. Arrangements will be made for close contacts to be conveyed to quarantine centres to undergo quarantine.

Two new cases preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 related to Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (July 26) that it has learnt that there are two new cases preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 related to the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH). Upon learning of the cases, the SSSH this morning has thoroughly cleaned and disinfected the places where the persons concerned had stayed and visited, and it will fully cooperate with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) for the centre's follow-up investigation.

One of the cases involves a worker in the SSSH who is responsible for handling livestock sundry duties at the lairage area. The worker concerned took a COVID-19 test via the CHP following the identification of a confirmed case in the building where he lives. He was notified by the CHP last night that he was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19. He has been staying home and has not gone to work since July 18.

The other case involves a buyer. He earlier sought medical treatment from a private clinic after feeling unwell and took a virus test. He was informed by the CHP yesterday that he was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19. He last performed duties on July 25 and had visited SSSH during worktime. He has been wearing a face mask when performing duties.

A spokesman for the FEHD said the operation of the SSSH has remained normal, and it has strived to ensure that its operation meets the required hygienic and environmental standards, and that all meat supplied to the market is fit for human consumption. Upon receiving notification of the first preliminary confirmed case found to be related to a worker in the slaughterhouse on Friday, the SSSH, in addition to regularly undertaking daily thorough cleaning and disinfection work according to the daily clearance arrangement, has immediately conducted additional enhanced deep cleaning and disinfection work at its surrounding areas, offices, rest areas and public facilities in the past three days.

During the epidemic, the SSSH has required all workers to observe the personal protective equipment guidelines, and implemented the following anti-epidemic measures:

(1) Install two infrared body temperature monitors at the entrance to ensure that only people with normal body temperature are allowed to enter the slaughterhouse;

(2) Require all people to wear a mask when they are in the slaughterhouse;

(3) Require all people to maintain social distancing and avoid

gathering;

(4) Provide alcohol-based handrub and remind all people to keep their hands clean; and

(5) Remind all those working in the slaughterhouse to observe personal hygiene, and that if they feel unwell, they should seek medical advice as soon as possible and should not go to work.

To further protect the health and safety of the workers working at the lairage area, in addition to requiring all workers to wear a face mask in the slaughterhouse, all workers working at the lairage area are additionally given a protective gown every day since yesterday as enhanced protection. As both of the first and second cases work at the lairage area, their employer will arrange for other workers to be tested for the virus again.

The SSSH will maintain close contact with the CHP. The CHP has already contacted the worker and the buyer concerned for follow-up, and has traced their close contacts in the slaughterhouse. Arrangements will be made for them to be tested or isolated if necessary.

The spokesman said, "The Government and the SSSH will endeavour to ensure the smooth operation of the slaughterhouse and that the supply of live pigs will not be affected. According to the current scientific information and advice of the World Health Organization (WHO), it is unlikely that humans will be infected with COVID-19 via food."

The spokesman added, "Nevertheless, the Center for Food Safety, based on the WHO advice on food safety, reminds the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times, including washing hands before and after handling raw and cooked foods; separating raw meat and internal organs from cooked foods; cooking food thoroughly, avoiding to eat raw or undercooked animals, etc. so as to ensure food safety."

Government supplements on quarantine exemption arrangement

In response to media enquiries arising from the Government's announcement on tightening of testing and quarantine arrangement for exempted persons, a Government spokesman today (July 26) provided the following supplementary information.

The mandatory 14-day quarantine requirement was imposed on all arrivals from the Mainland (and subsequently extended to Macao and Taiwan) from February 8 under Cap. 599C Regulation while that on arrivals from all other countries took effect from March 19 through Cap. 599E Regulation made by the

Chief Executive in Council under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Chapter 599). These Regulations were introduced to reduce population mobility between Hong Kong and other places in order to contain the spread of COVID-19 into the local community. Both Regulations contain specific provisions to exempt certain categories of people arriving Hong Kong by air, sea or land for legitimate purposes and empower the Chief Secretary for Administration as the approving authority for exempting either categories or individuals meeting those legitimate purposes such as government operations (applicable to HKSARG and other governments including consular staff based in Hong Kong), and people whose travel is to support the essential operation of Hong Kong or related to anti-epidemic work.

"Cross-border truck drivers totalling some 10 000, air crew operating cargo and passenger flights and sea crew of cargo vessels loading/unloading in Hong Kong come under the 'essential operation' categories and have been exempted since the commencement of the Regulations. These exemptions are essential to ensure an uninterrupted supply of goods and daily necessities and maintain the economy," a Government spokesman explained.

Regarding sea crew arrangements, in response to a global call for action to address the dire situation of seafarers stranded at sea because of COVID-19 and strong appeals from the local shipping sector, the exemption arrangements were extended in June to vessels without cargo operation involving seafarers coming to Hong Kong for crew change under very stringent requirements of "fly and embark" or "disembark and fly" without the need to stay in Hong Kong. However, in practice, there were genuine isolated cases of seafarers requiring to stay overnight in Hong Kong because of the scheduling mismatch of flight and vessel.

Though exempted from mandatory 14-day quarantine, exempted persons are issued with medical surveillance notices by the Department of Health and are asked to comply with precautionary and personal hygiene measures including the wearing of masks. In light of the frequency of cross-boundary trips by truck drivers, medical surveillance notices issued to them have a validity of 14 days. The total number of medical surveillance notices issued in a month or the total number of such notices issued (we notice the media was quoting a figure of 290 000 which was the total number of medical surveillance notices issued so far) could not therefore be taken as the number of persons exempted under the said arrangement. For illustration, a cross-boundary truck driver commuting daily would have been issued over ten such notices since the commencement of the arrangement.

The above exemption arrangement has worked well in the past few months meeting the needs of Hong Kong amidst a major disease outbreak. With the epidemic situation stabilised in the months of April to June, additional exemption categories to facilitate cross-boundary business were introduced. But these have not been widely practised given the 14-day mandatory quarantine requirement introduced by the Guangdong authorities and the yet-to-be implemented mutual recognition of virus test results and exemption of designated cross-boundary travellers.

Based on risk-level assessment by the Centre for Health Protection, the Government has been adjusting its anti-epidemic measures especially under the "suppress and lift" strategy. In recognition of a recent increase in the number of confirmed cases of air crew and sea crew personnel, relevant departments have been discussing with airlines and shipping companies on measures to reduce any infection risks being brought into Hong Kong. The suspension and tightening measures were announced today (July 26) and they are to take effect from July 29 taking account of the flights and vessel callings planned. A wholesale cessation of the exemption arrangement will not be in the public interest.

Regarding the question of whether the tightening of testing arrangement put in place for air crew and sea crew should also be applied to arrivals via the two land border control points, the Government spokesman pointed out that any control measure has to be considered in the light of epidemiological evidence. In respect of arrivals from the Mainland, Macao and Taiwan, that is, under Cap. 599C, over 200 000 quarantine orders have been issued so far without a single confirmed case whereas for arrivals from other countries, that is, under Cap.599E, of the roughly 130 000 persons being put under quarantine, 728 cases were subsequently confirmed positive. A difference in treatment is thus justified especially having regard to the current limitation in testing capacity.

"The Government will continue to closely monitor the situation and adopt suitable measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring as far as possible the essential operation of our city," the spokesman added.