

Work arrangements after rainstorm warnings

The Labour Department (LD) today (May 30) reminded employers to make practical and reasonable work arrangements for staff after rainstorms. Employers should also make flexible arrangements for staff to resume work after a rainstorm warning is cancelled, with due consideration to road, traffic and other conditions. This will help maintain good labour-management relations, and ensure the safety of employees and the smooth operation of organisations.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work on time upon cancellation of a rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the situations of individual employees and handle each case flexibly. As rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, for employees who are not able to report for duty or resume duty on time due to adverse weather conditions, employers should not withhold their wages, good attendance bonus or allowances without reasons. Employers should enquire into the reasons and give due consideration to the exceptional circumstances in each case, and should not penalise or dismiss the employee concerned rashly," an LD spokesman said.

The spokesman also reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Factories and Industrial Undertakings 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 issuance 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 provide and maintain a safe working environment for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

The LD has published the "Code of Practice in Times of Typhoons and Rainstorms", which outlines the major principles, the framework, the reference guidelines and information on relevant legislation for reference. The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).

HKSAR Government launches Online Exhibition of the 30th Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Basic Law

The "Online Exhibition of the 30th Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China" is launched today (May 30). The Exhibition will present, in the form of a time tunnel, the historical background, drafting, promulgation and successful implementation of the Basic Law in Hong Kong.

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairman of the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee (BLPSC), Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, said, "The Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law form the constitutional basis of the HKSAR. In accordance with the Constitution, the National People's Congress decided to establish the HKSAR and enacted the Basic Law, prescribing the systems to be practised in the HKSAR.

"The Basic Law solidly and clearly provides the legal guarantee for the implementation of 'one country, two systems' in the HKSAR. The basic policies of the People's Republic of China regarding Hong Kong, namely 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy, are fully implemented through the Basic Law.

"The Preamble of the Basic Law states clearly that the HKSAR was established for upholding national unity and territorial integrity. It is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR as part of China to safeguard national security. The National People's Congress passed on May 28 the Decision on establishing and improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security. The legislation to be enacted for the HKSAR to safeguard national security will not affect the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents. The HKSAR Government will fully co-operate in completing the relevant work on legislation as soon as possible, ensuring the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong under 'one country, two systems'," he emphasised.

"I encourage members of the public to visit the Online Exhibition, look back at the important milestones during the 30 years since the promulgation of the Basic Law, deepen their understanding of the concept and implementation of the 'one country, two systems' principle, and reflect on how critical the guarantee of the Basic Law is towards the long-term development of Hong Kong," he said.

"It is imperative to enable the public to have a comprehensive and accurate understanding of the Constitution and the Basic Law through promotion and education. This year, the BLPSC will strengthen our work in

promoting and educating the public on the Constitution and the Basic Law, including the local community, teachers and students, youths, civil servants, the industrial, commercial and professional sectors and so on. This will enable people from different sectors to have a deeper understanding of the relationship between 'one country' and 'two systems', and consider how best to grasp the opportunities ahead and further promote the implementation of 'one country, two systems'," he said.

The Exhibition is jointly presented by the BLPSC and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau. Members of the public can visit the Online Exhibition at bl30a-exhibition.org for information about the Constitution and the Basic Law, and take part in online interactive games. The HKSAR Government will launch other activities to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law in due course.

MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (May 30) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

Red flag hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 30) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Care centres operating on Saturdays remain open

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals:

"The Social Welfare Department announces that while the Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, child care centres, centres providing after school care programmes, elderly services centres and day rehabilitation units including sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, integrated vocational training centres and day activity centres that normally operate on Saturdays will remain open during their normal operating hours. However, if necessary, members of the public can contact the centres to make arrangements for the safe return home of their children and family members."