

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

Employers and employees should take precautions during cold weather

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Cold Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Cold Weather Warning is in force, they should take appropriate precautions such as reminding employees who have to work outdoors or in remote areas to wear appropriately warm clothing, and make arrangements for employees to rotate from outdoor to indoor or sheltered work sites as far as possible. Employees should take note of the weather report, wear appropriately warm clothing and be mindful of their health conditions. They should notify their supervisors and seek medical help immediately if feeling unwell, such as having cold limbs and body shivering.

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 16) reminded the public, particularly the elderly and people

with chronic illnesses, to adopt appropriate measures to protect their health in view of the cold weather.

A spokesman for the CHP said that cold weather can easily trigger or exacerbate diseases, especially among the elderly and persons suffering from heart disease, respiratory illness or other chronic illnesses.

"Elderly people have less insulating fat beneath their skin to keep them warm and their body temperature control mechanism may be weaker. Their body may not be able to appropriately respond to the cold weather," the spokesman said.

Some senior persons may have decreased mobility, which can in turn slow down their ability to generate and conserve body heat. Chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and endocrine disorders, may undermine the health of elderly people and lower their metabolic rate, subsequently causing their body to generate less heat.

The CHP reminds the public, in particular the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses, to adopt the following preventive measures:

- Take note of the weather forecast. Wear warm clothing, including hats, scarves, gloves and socks accordingly;
- Consume sufficient food to ensure adequate calorie intake;
- Perform regular exercise to facilitate blood circulation and heat production;
- Stay in a warm environment and avoid prolonged outdoor exposure;
- Use heaters with care and maintain adequate indoor ventilation; and
- Seek medical advice if feeling unwell.

In addition, the public should avoid alcoholic beverages.

"Drinking alcohol cannot keep you warm. Alcohol accelerates the loss of body heat through dilated blood vessels, resulting in chilling instead," the spokesman said.

"Parents should ensure that babies are sufficiently warm, but it is also important to keep babies lightly clothed to avoid overheating them," the spokesman added.

Parents should observe the following safety measures when putting their children to bed:

- Keep the room well ventilated and with a comfortable temperature;
- Always place babies on their back to sleep. Babies usually sleep well without a pillow;
- Place babies on a firm and well-fitted mattress to sleep. Avoid soft objects and loose bedding;
- Leave their head, face and arms uncovered during sleep; and
- Let babies sleep in a cot placed in the parents' room and near their bed.

Members of the public are advised to take heed of the following advice to reduce the risk of getting influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Maintain adequate rest, a balanced diet and regular physical activity, and avoid stress and do not smoke;
- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good hand hygiene via proper handwashing or use of alcohol-based handrub;
- Ensure good ventilation;
- Wear a face mask in the event of influenza-like symptoms, while taking care of patients and when visiting hospitals or clinics;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper in a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands immediately afterwards;
- Seek medical advice when feeling unwell, and stay at home;
- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination, which is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications; and
- Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and persons aged 50 to 64, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination early. Please see details of the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme on the CHP's [website](#).

Food-borne diseases, particularly those linked to hot pot cuisine, are also common in cold weather. The following preventive measures should be taken:

- Wash hands before handling and consuming food;
- Do not patronise unlicensed vendors or those with poor hygienic standards while selecting food;
- Wash and cook all food thoroughly;
- Vegetables should be washed thoroughly in clean running water before cooking and consumption. When appropriate, scrub vegetables with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances, including pesticide residues and contaminants, from the surface and crevices;
- Shrimps should be fully cooked by cooking them until the shells turn red and the flesh turns white and opaque;
- For shellfish like scallops and geoduck, scrub the shells thoroughly and remove internal organs;
- Most hot pot ingredients should be stored in a refrigerator at 4 degrees Celsius or below, while frozen food should be stored in a freezer at -18 degrees C or below;
- Never use raw eggs as a dipping sauce for hot pot; and
- Use different sets of chopsticks to handle raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.

In addition, the public should not use charcoal as cooking fuel in poorly ventilated areas, especially indoors, to avoid harmful exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) and prevent CO poisoning. While using other kinds of fuel, the public should also ensure adequate ventilation.

For more health information, the public may call the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) or visit the [CHP's website](#) and [Facebook Fanpage](#).

The public may also call Dial-a-Weather (1878 200) or visit the website of the [Hong Kong Observatory](#) for the latest weather information and forecast, or its page on [Weather Information for Senior Citizens](#).

HKSAR Government is arranging chartered flight to take Hong Kong residents on board Diamond Princess cruise ship home free of charge

A spokesman for the Security Bureau said on February 15 that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is arranging chartered flight to take the Hong Kong residents under quarantine on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship back to Hong Kong free of charge soonest possible after they are permitted to disembark and land. Once the Japanese authorities have confirmed the detailed arrangements, the Government will inform the affected Hong Kong residents details of the return date and related arrangements as soon as possible.

Taking into consideration the potential risk on public health, the persons concerned will be arranged to stay at quarantine centre for 14 days upon their arrival in Hong Kong.

The Immigration Department (ImmD) officers are concurrently notifying all of the concerned Hong Kong residents the above arrangements by text messages.

The ImmD and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Tokyo have been maintaining close contact with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Japan, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, to keep abreast of the updated conditions of those Hong Kong residents under quarantine on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship docking in Yokohama, Japan. The HKSAR Government will continue to urge the Japanese side to confirm the detailed arrangements for the disembarkation of the passengers on board as soon as possible.

According to the information provided by the cruise operator, there are around 330 Hong Kong residents on board, including 260 holding a HKSAR passport and around 70 holding a foreign passport.

Buildings Department extends special work arrangements to February 23

In accordance with the Government's extension of its special work arrangements for government departments to reduce social contacts and the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, the Buildings Department (BD) announced today (February 15) that the BD will continue to provide emergency and other essential services as well as basic and limited-scale public services between next Monday (February 17) and February 23. The services will be mainly handling public reports on building safety and unauthorised building works in progress, critical statutory submissions for new developments, registration of building professionals and contractors, advisory services for licensing authorities and implementation of Operation Building Bright 2.0.

Submission of the following applications and documents personally should be through:

1. A drop-in box located at G/F, Buildings Department Headquarters, North Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon, (BD Headquarters) for collection of the specified forms and supporting documents required to be submitted under the Minor Works Control System, the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme, as well as applications for registration and renewal of registration of building professionals and contractors under the Buildings Ordinance during the period from 10am to 4pm from Monday to Friday;
2. A tender/quotation box located at the ground floor of the BD Headquarters for receiving tender/quotation documents during the period from 9.30am to 5.30pm from Monday to Friday; and
3. A drop-in counter located at the office of the BD's New Buildings Division on 7/F, 14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing, Hong Kong for collection of applications and related documents and forms for new building works during the period from 10am to 2pm on Tuesday and Thursday.

The department will issue receipts/acknowledgements of submissions in due course. However, the handling time of the above services may be longer than usual.

The Building Information Centre and all receipt counters, dispatch counters, general enquiry counters and meeting rooms of the BD will not be open to the public until further notice. All appointments, meetings (except meetings essential to meet statutory requirements such as Minor Works Contractor Registration Committee meetings) and inspections scheduled for the

period will be rescheduled to later dates and the individuals concerned will be notified in due course.

Emergency reports can be made on 1823. For general enquiries and reports, members of the public may call 1823 or inform the department by email, online reporting, fax or post.

Email: enquiry@bd.gov.hk

Electronic Reporting Form: eform.one.gov.hk/form/bd0001/en

Submission of Electronic Information: receipt@bd.gov.hk

Mailing address: G/F, Buildings Department Headquarters, North Tower, West Kowloon Government Offices, 11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon

Fax: 2537 4992