

# [HKO and SCHSA remind public to get prepared for coming cold weather \(with photos\)](#)

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) and the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association (SCHSA) held a joint press conference today (December 4) to remind the public to get prepared for the coming cold weather.

Speaking at the joint press conference, the Assistant Director of the HKO, Dr Cheng Cho-ming, said that a replenishment of the intense northeast monsoon is expected to reach the coast of Guangdong tomorrow (December 5). Meanwhile, a band of clouds will bring rain patches to the region. Temperatures in Hong Kong will fall significantly during the day tomorrow. Although the weather will improve in the following couple of days, it will be windy with cold mornings under the influence of the intense northeast monsoon. Members of the public, particularly the elderly and persons with chronic medical conditions, should get prepared for the cold weather to protect themselves against potential health impacts caused by low temperatures.

Dr Cheng pointed out that the HKO has been continuously enhancing its online information services to provide timely weather information for the public. The relevant services have been welcomed by the public. The HKO launched a revamped website late last month to enhance the user experience for visitors including the elderly.

The Chief Executive Officer of the SCHSA, Ms Maura Wong, said that the elderly are more prone to being affected by cold weather because their body temperature adjustment mechanism might have weakened. The SCHSA urges the public to show more care and provide timely assistance to elderly people in need, so that the latter may be better prepared for the coming cold weather.

The HKO has been closely collaborating with the SCHSA over the years to promote the use of weather information for better care of the elderly. For instance, the HKO launched the Extended Outlook forecast service in 2017, providing probability forecasts of daily minimum and maximum temperatures for the next 14 days. The service has enabled the SCHSA to plan for resources and manpower in response to the changing weather in a timely manner. It also allows the elderly and their caregivers to get prepared for temperature changes.

The public can obtain the latest weather forecast and the nine-day weather forecast by using the HKO's Dial-a-Weather service at 1878 200, or the HKO's mobile app "MyObservatory", or visiting the HKO's website at the following links:

Weather forecast: [www.weather.gov.hk/en/wxinfo/currwx/flw.htm](http://www.weather.gov.hk/en/wxinfo/currwx/flw.htm)

Nine-day weather forecast: [www.weather.gov.hk/en/wxinfo/currwx/fnd.htm](http://www.weather.gov.hk/en/wxinfo/currwx/fnd.htm)



## [Forty-seven persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operation \(with photos\)](#)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a territory-wide anti-illegal worker operation codenamed "Breakthrough" from December 1 to 3. A total of 32 suspected illegal workers and 15 suspected employers were arrested.

During the operation, ImmD investigators raided 33 target locations including a recycling depot, a beauty shop, garbage collection depots, massage parlours, premises under renovation, restaurants and wet markets. The suspected illegal workers comprised 13 men and 19 women, aged 22 to 61. Among them, a man was a holder of recognisance form which prohibits him from taking any employment. In addition, four men and eight women were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards. Meanwhile, nine men and six women, aged 32 to 67, were suspected of employing the suspected illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any

business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screenings of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.



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## LCQ 2: Conversion of industrial buildings to transitional housing

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Lo Wai-kwok and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

The Chief Executive (CE) pointed out in last year's Policy Address that a task force under the Transport and Housing Bureau would actively render assistance to, and facilitate the implementation of, the various short-term community initiatives to increase the supply of transitional housing. The Government would also allow, under the relaunched measures to revitalise industrial buildings, wholesale conversion of industrial buildings into transitional housing. Moreover, CE has indicated in this year's Policy Address that in order not to lengthen the waiting time for families applying for public rental housing (PRH), redeveloping aged PRH estates will not be considered for the time being. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the functions and scope of work of the task force; whether they include consulting the trades and owners concerned and providing owners of industrial buildings with support and advisory services on conversion of industrial buildings into transitional housing; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will review the policies on and support measures for conversion of industrial buildings into transitional housing, including

stipulating the renewal arrangement and the financial assistance for maintenance to which the owners are entitled annually, so that the owners will be more eager to pursue conversion of industrial buildings; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider converting some of the factory estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority into transitional housing to temporarily accommodate residents affected by PRH redevelopment projects, so as to enable the commencement of the projects concerned; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the question raised by the Dr Hon Lo Wai-kwok is as follows:

One of the housing initiatives proposed in the 2019 Policy Address is the provision of 10 000 transitional housing units in the coming three years to alleviate the hardship faced by families waiting for Public Rental Housing (PRH) and those living in unpleasant conditions.

A task force on transitional housing (Task Force) led by the Under Secretary has been established under the Transport and Housing Bureau in June 2018 to actively provide one-stop project co-ordination and professional support for community organisations. The Task Force maintains close co-operation with relevant parties holistically on transitional housing projects, including proposing, implementation, procurement and funding; co-ordinates the efforts from different policy bureaux and departments; and advises the administrative and statutory procedures to implement the projects and commence works as soon as possible. They are also responsible for monitoring the implementation and progress of various projects to ensure the use of resources is complying with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness, achieving value for money, ensuring progress and operation are being on the right track.

The Task Force had participated in more than 100 meetings and enquiry discussions with stakeholders last year, including community organisations and their hired professionals, professional institutions (such as architecture, surveying, engineering, planning and environment, etc), the contributors, commercial sector and owners who are interested for conversion of their industrial building into transitional housing, etc. They had gone through the preliminary architectural designs for the projects and issues relating to the environment, traffic assessment impact, fire safety and infrastructure with relevant government departments with a view to address problems promptly and obtain the necessary approval as soon as possible.

The Task Force has also convened six inter-bureau/departmental meetings, removing obstacles successfully and making progress in the conversion of industrial buildings. Regarding the limitation of the existing planning and design, a pragmatic approach will be adopted to favourably consider

exercising flexibility in enforcing the building design requirements under the Buildings Ordinance. Exemptions or modifications will be granted to this type of projects, while compensation measures will be imposed without sacrificing safety and hygiene concerns. The Town Planning Board (TPB) agreed that for transitional housing projects not exceeding five years, co-ordinated by the Task Force, in permanent buildings (including wholesale-converted industrial buildings in the 'Commercial', 'Comprehensive Development Area' and 'Other Specified Uses' annotated 'Business' and 'Residential' zones in the urban and new town areas) can be regarded as for temporary use, which is always permitted under the Outline Zoning Plan. The Lands Department will also exempt payment of waiver fees and associated costs for land applications related to the revitalisation of industrial buildings into transitional housing. If both the owner and community organisations are willing to continue the project, the Task Force will actively assist in applying for an extension. We will evaluate based on the time of application submission, while each term and thereafter extension will normally be five years.

The Task Force is currently studying several conversion of industrial building to transitional housing projects with community organisations and owners. Since these projects have yet reached the final decision stage, we consider it better to defer to the proponents to announce them when agreement was reached.

The Task Force has sought the endorsement of the Panel on Housing of Legislative Council on the setup of a \$5 billion funding scheme to support the works expenses of transitional housing projects which also covers the conversion of industrial building. The ceiling works cost is set at \$550,000 per flat for conversion of non-domestic building. We will seek funding approval from the Finance Committee at the soonest possible to facilitate the early commencement of various transitional housing projects.

Community organisations operating transitional housing may reimburse their day-to-day management and maintenance expenses, as well as provision of appropriate supporting services expenses from the receivable rental income. They may flexibly determine the rent level based on merit of individual transitional housing project to ensure a balanced operation of each project.

Given the current acute shortage of public housing supply, we consider that sites suitable for constructing domestic blocks should be reserved for public housing development. The Housing Authority is exploring redevelopment of the existing industrial buildings to public housing, especially for rental blocks.

As a matter of fact, transitional housing projects are carried out by pooling various community care, efforts and resources. The Government will continue with its active facilitation and communication with the community, collaborating government and social resources to boost the supply of transitional housing and relieve the pressure of families living in unpleasant conditions and long waiting for PRH.

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## **Special traffic arrangements in Stanley from this Saturday**

The Transport Department (TD) today (December 4) reminded the public that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Stanley for three consecutive weekends starting from this Saturday (December 7, 8, 14, 15, 21 and 22) to facilitate the holding of an event at Stanley Plaza, including:

\* The section of Stanley New Street between Stanley Village Road and Stanley Market Road will be intermittently closed from 11am to 6pm (except for vehicles with a permit, vehicles of persons with disabilities and emergency services vehicles); and

\* The effective hours of pedestrian precincts on Stanley Market Road will be extended. The effective hours will be from 11am to 11pm on Saturdays (December 7, 14 and 21) and from 11am to 9pm on Sundays (December 8, 15 and 22).

The TD anticipates the traffic in the vicinity and its approach roads will be busy on the above days. Members of the public are advised to use public transport services as far as possible, or to consider the free shuttle services provided by the event organiser (please refer to [www.linkhk.com/en/promotion/325](http://www.linkhk.com/en/promotion/325) for details). Due to limited parking spaces in the area, those who have not reserved parking spaces with the event organiser should avoid driving to the vicinity. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience in the case of traffic congestion and follow police instructions.

Details of the special traffic arrangements are now available on the department's website ([www.td.gov.hk](http://www.td.gov.hk)).

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## **FEHD releases results of applications for new niches at Tsang Tsui and Wong Nai Chung Road columbaria**

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 4) conducted the open lot drawing and computer balloting for the applications for new extendable niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium in Tuen Mun and Wong Nai

Chung Road Columbarium in Wan Chai, and the results have been released.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The FEHD will allocate in this exercise 21 235 extendable niches including 20 380 niches at Tsang Tsui Columbarium (220 large niches and 20 160 standard niches) and 855 standard niches at Wong Nai Chung Road Columbarium and a total of 30 111 eligible applications have been received. Drawing of lots and computer balloting were conducted today to determine the priority of all eligible applications and the designated niches for individual successful applicants respectively."

"The ballot results have been uploaded to the FEHD website ([www.fehd.gov.hk](http://www.fehd.gov.hk)) and will be posted up at the FEHD's Hong Kong and Kowloon Cemeteries and Crematoria Offices and Public Niche Allocation Office from tomorrow (December 5) for viewing by applicants. Applicants can also call the hotline 2841 9111 to check the results. The FEHD will also notify the successful applicants by SMS and email of the designated niche allocated and later issue letters in batches to invite them for completion of allocation formalities and payment of fees at Public Niche Allocation Office according to their priority."

For enquiries, please call 2841 9111.