

Classes of kindergartens and some special schools are suspended

Attention TV and radio duty announcers:

Please broadcast the following special announcement by the Education Bureau concerning schools, and repeat it at suitable intervals:

As the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal no. 3 is now in force, classes of kindergartens, schools for children with physical disability and schools for children with intellectual disability are suspended today.

Reopening of Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

The Marine Department announces that the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal in Sheung Wan has been reopened.

For details of ferry schedules, please contact relevant shipping companies direct.

Tropical Cyclone Wipha roundup

As Tropical Cyclone Wipha is moving away from Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Observatory issued the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 at 11.40pm yesterday (July 31) to replace the No. 8 Northeast Gale or Storm Signal issued at 1.40pm.

During the typhoon period, the 1823 Government Call Centre received 14 reports of fallen trees. The Drainage Services Department received three confirmed flooding cases. The Civil Engineering and Development Department received three reports of landslide.

The Home Affairs Department opened 25 temporary shelters in various

districts and 253 people sought refuge at the shelters.

According to the Hospital Authority, as at 11.30pm, a total of 20 people, including eight men and 12 women, have sought medical treatment at public hospitals during the typhoon period.

On air traffic, the Airport Authority Hong Kong reported that a total of 693 flights were delayed and 25 flights were cancelled yesterday.

Marine Department announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

As No.3 Strong Wind Signal has been issued, the Marine Department reminds vessel owners, masters and persons-in-charge of vessels that they should take precautionary measures immediately and properly secure their vessels at safe locations.

In case of an accident, a report should be made immediately to the Vessel Traffic Centre at 2233 7801.

Make reasonable arrangements with employees on resuming work after typhoons or rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (July 31) reminded employers to make practical and reasonable work arrangements for staff after typhoons and rainstorms. Employers should also make flexible arrangements for staff to resume work after a typhoon or 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 establishments.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work on time upon the cancellation of a typhoon or rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the situations of individual employees and handle each case

flexibly," an LD spokesman said.

"As typhoons and rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, for employees who are not able to report for duty or resume work 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," he 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 annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days employees are entitled to under the Employment Ordinance to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from employees' failure to report for duty when Typhoon Signal No. 8, the Black Rainstorm Warning or "extreme conditions" are in force. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with the 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 revised the "Code of Practice in Times of Typhoons and Rainstorms", which provides a reference for employers and employees on the work and resumption of work arrangements in the event of the Government issuing the new post-super typhoon announcement on "extreme conditions", as well as the major principles, the framework, the reference guidelines and information on relevant legislation for reference in drawing up the work arrangements under adverse weather conditions. 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).