

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 2) 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 reminded 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; and
- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination, which is suitable for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications.

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](#).

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.

HKSARG reiterates its zero tolerance on HK independence

At the public meeting organised by Civil Human Rights Front at the CGO East Wing Forecourt (the Forecourt) this afternoon (January 1), there were individual participants carrying placard with slogan advocating "independence of Hong Kong". They ignored the advice of the security guards and forced their way into the Forecourt, causing confusion and two security guards falling on the ground. A Government's spokesman seriously condemns such an

incident.

â€œIn line with the philosophy of governance of the current-term Government, the Forecourt was reopened on December 28, 2017. So far, a total of 31 public meetings have been approved to be held at the Forecourt and the overall arrangements have been smooth. Although members of the public are permitted to conduct public meetings or processions or express views at the Forecourt, the Government shall not allow any activities advocating or promoting "independence of Hong Kong" to take place therein.

In handling the application for conducting the public meeting at the Forecourt today, the Administration Wing has reminded the organiser to abide by the laws in force in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and appeal to the participants not to conduct any activity that contravenes the laws in force in the HKSAR, including the Basic Law.

Yet, the person concerned carried a placard with message advocating "independence of Hong Kong" this afternoon, ignoring the advice of security guards at the scene, forcing their way into the Forecourt, and causing confusion and two security guards falling on the ground. After entering the Forecourt, the person concerned, with the consent of the public meeting organiser, made some remarks advocating "independence of Hong Kong" at the stage.

The spokesman reiterated that advocating "independence of Hong Kong" is inconsistent with "one country, two systems" and the Basic Law, as well as the long-term and overall interests of the community of Hong Kong, undermining the constitutional order of the HKSAR. The HKSAR Government has the duty to abide by the law and uphold the constitutional order in accordance with the Basic Law, safeguarding the long-term and overall interests of Hong Kong. HKSAR Government reiterates its zero tolerance on "Hong Kong independence".

The spokesman expressed deep regret that the organiser has not appealed to participants not to conduct any activity that contravenes the laws in force in the HKSAR, including the Basic Law.

Government responds to January 1 procession

The Government fully respects the right of Hong Kong people to take part in public processions and their freedom to express their views, a Government spokesman said in response to a procession today (January 1). The current-term Government has adopted a new governance philosophy to care, listen and act since assuming office, the spokesman said, adding that it has also spared no effort in playing the roles of a facilitator and a promoter, and

proactively implementing a series of policy initiatives to inject new impetus into Hong Kong's economy to bring about a better life for the community.

The spokesman said the rule of law is the foundation of Hong Kong's pluralistic society and free economy. It is the core value shared and treasured by everyone in Hong Kong. The Government will remain steadfast to protect and uphold the rule of law.

The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China is the constitutional and legal basis for the successful implementation of "one country, two systems". The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has the responsibility to fully implement the Basic Law, uphold the principle of "one country" and leverage the advantages of "two systems", with a view to ensuring the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong.

The maintenance of the rule of law in Hong Kong is well recognised internationally. In the Worldwide Governance Indicators project of the World Bank Group, Hong Kong's percentile rank in respect of the rule of law leapt from 69.9 in 1996 to 93.75 in 2017 and has been persistently over 90 since 2003.

The spokesman said that under Article 63 of the Basic Law, the Department of Justice (DoJ) of the HKSAR shall control criminal prosecutions, free from any interference. All prosecution decisions are made by the DoJ independently without fear or favour, free from any political consideration. They are made strictly in accordance with the applicable laws, evidence and the Prosecution Code.

To meet the public demand for land and housing, the Government has formulated new land and housing policies which are welcomed by the community. A series of initiatives in the short, medium and long terms will be implemented to increase land supply. The Lantau Tomorrow Vision announced in the 2018 Policy Address is a forward-looking blueprint to provide sizeable pieces of land for housing, transportation and commercial developments. The Government will continue to develop land resources in a resolute and persistent manner through a multi-pronged approach so that there will be adequate housing for the public to enjoy life and to call Hong Kong their home. The Government will also consider in detail the valuable recommendations submitted by the Task Force on Land Supply in its report.

Regarding election matters, the spokesman emphasised that the Government has always respected and safeguarded the rights enjoyed by Hong Kong residents according to law, including the rights to vote and to stand for election. At the same time, Article 1 of the Basic Law states that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China. The Government has a duty to implement and uphold the Basic Law and to ensure that all elections will be conducted in accordance with the Basic Law and relevant electoral laws.

On Article 23 of the Basic Law, the spokesman pointed out that the HKSAR Government has the constitutional responsibility to legislate for Article 23

in order to safeguard national security. The Chief Executive has stated a number of times that the Government will carefully consider all relevant factors, act prudently and continue its efforts to create a favourable social environment for the legislative work.

The spokesman also said that the Government understands the aspirations of the community for selecting the Chief Executive through "one person, one vote". However, the Government cannot ignore reality and rashly re-embark on political reform, making it difficult for the community to focus on development. The Government will act prudently in this respect.

The spokesman added that riding on the unprecedented opportunities brought about by the nation's Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area development, the Government will proactively work hand in hand with various sectors to participate in the developments. Taking part in these initiatives will boost traditional industries in which Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages, and help Hong Kong to develop new industries and explore new economic growth engines.

CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 1) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection.

The 8-year-old boy, with good past health, has presented with fever, cough, runny nose and confusion since December 30. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Prince of Wales Hospital on the next day and was admitted for further management on the same day. He is now in a stable condition.

His nasopharyngeal aspirate tested positive for influenza A virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had received seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) for the current season and had travelled to Foshan, Guangdong during the incubation period. His home contacts have remained asymptomatic so far. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"The latest surveillance data showed that the overall influenza activity in Hong Kong continued to increase. It is anticipated that the local influenza activity will further increase and the winter influenza season will arrive soon. Members of the public should maintain good personal protection against influenza," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, are recommended to receive SIV for personal protection. Eligible persons are urged to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies. Vaccination among family members is key to protecting their personal and family's health."

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene for protection against influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Wash or clean hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, or after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs;
- Cover the nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks when staying in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

For more information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [Flu Express](#).