

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 29) 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.

Yellow fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (December 29) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (December 29). They are, on Hong Kong Island, Hong Kong Adventure Corps Limited; in Kowloon, People Service Centre Limited; and in the New Territories, the Federation of New Territories Youth Foundation Limited, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people distinguish between the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on December 29 is as follows:

Region	Name of Organisation	Colour of Collection Bag	Colour of Flag
Hong Kong Island	Hong Kong Adventure Corps Limited	Red	Green
Kowloon	People Service Centre Limited	Orange	Green
New Territories	The Federation of New Territories Youth Foundation Limited	Yellow	White

For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline on 2343 2255, or the Charitable Fund-raising Control Team on 2832 4311 during office hours. Information on the flag days of the month is available at the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_whatsnew). Permits for flag days containing contact information of the flag-selling organisations and information on the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_recentlyap). For enquiries about the detailed flag-selling arrangements, please contact the individual flag-selling organisations.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by Public Subscription Permit issued by the SWD have also been uploaded to the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/fundraising).

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session at Hong Kong International Airport (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session at the Hong Kong International Airport today (December 28):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, what do you think of the criticism against SJ, saying that she is evasive and not convincing enough? Do you yourself think it has been politicised? Secondly, do you think the public perception of the DoJ has been affected by this case?

Chief Executive: First of all, I have explained and clarified that there is no question of the Secretary for Justice being evasive, the question is – I have approved her leave from the 15th of December to the 26th of December, both days inclusive. And she has informed me that she would be out of Hong Kong throughout the whole period. So without her physical presence, there is no opportunity for her to respond to questions. And I did contact her because you remember that on the 15th of December, before I departed for my duty report in Beijing, I did say that if some Legislative Council members and society have questions and they want more information, then maybe I believed that the Secretary for Justice would be happy to respond. That was on the 15th of December. Then I realised that she was not in Hong Kong and was on leave approved by me. After my reporting of duty and before I departed for my own leave, I did manage to contact her, when she was not in Hong Kong. But she explained to me that actually the statement that the Department of Justice issued on the 12th of December was more or less the whole thing that she could say, and that was also on the advice of the Prosecutions Division. That was all that she could say. She had very little to add or supplement to what has been contained in the press release. And when she came back from leave, standing right here, on the 26th of December, that was the first occasion when she was back in Hong Kong and she was standing here to comment, although you would say that there was little substantive in her comments because she just could not say more on this particular case, especially now that apparently there is a judicial review application against her decision, so the whole matter is now into a judicial process that makes it even more difficult for the Secretary for Justice or colleagues of the Department of Justice to provide any more information. Now as far as the perception, of course as a political officer for many years, I do realise that public perception is important and that is why in this term of government, I have been advocating transparency that we should attend Legislative Council and do explanation but that doesn't mean that we should allow issues which are supposed to be not subject to interference to be unduly interfered and that is prosecution decision. So, we have to stand by principles and they are very

important principles underpinning the rule of law in Hong Kong. So on this particular case, I respect the professional decision made by the Secretary for Justice and her colleagues and I support her decision based on her legal expertise and very rich experience over many years.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)