

Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 18) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 18) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Members of public invited to Hospital Authority Board Meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Members of the public are invited to attend the Hospital Authority (HA) Board Meeting to be held on December 20 (Thursday) at 3.30pm.

The HA Board Meeting has been open to members of the public since 1998 to demonstrate the continuous efforts of the Authority to enhance its transparency and public accountability. The HA Board holds meetings at regular intervals to discuss major health policy issues which have an impact

on the public.

Through these open meetings, the community is able to understand more about the role and functions of the HA Board as well as the operation and services of the HA and its hospitals.

The HA Board will discuss the following agenda items in the coming meeting:

- Winter surge preparation
- Information technology innovation of the Hospital Authority
- Cluster Presentation Programme – Kowloon Central Cluster – Fostering Innovation in Training – Multi-disciplinary Simulation and Skills Centre

Meeting agenda and papers will be made available to the public at the meeting. Members of the public are reminded that they attend the Board Meeting only as observers and will not be participating in the meeting discussions.

Members of the public who are interested to attend the coming Board Meeting have to make advance booking by contacting the Secretariat of the HA Board at 2300 6797 during office hours. To facilitate booking arrangements, members of the public are advised to provide their name and contact telephone number. In view of the limited seating available in the Public Gallery of the meeting venue, seating will be reserved on a first come, first served basis.

[EPD successfully prosecutes importer for illegal import of hazardous electronic waste from United States \(with photos\)](#)

â€‹Hong Kong Cheng Ron Trading Company, a local importer that illegally imported hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from the United States (US), was convicted and fined \$10,000 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (December 18) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO).

With the assistance of the Customs and Excise Department, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff intercepted an imported container from the US at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in June this year. The container was claimed to contain metal scrap, but upon inspection it was found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste comprising waste batteries, with a weight of about 9

tonnes. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted container to its place of origin and notified the relevant local authority to follow up. The department also instigated prosecution against the importer in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that waste batteries are hazardous e-waste, containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. The EPD will continue to rigorously combat the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste to protect the environment.

The spokesman reminded importers of the waste recycling trade not to illegally import (including import into or transshipment through Hong Kong) or export hazardous waste. According to the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to import or export hazardous waste without obtaining a valid permit beforehand. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste: www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.



Maternity leave for staff in aided, caput, DSS schools and kindergartens joining Kindergarten Education Scheme

extended to 14 weeks

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (December 18) issued circulars to all aided, caput, Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools, and kindergartens which have joined the Kindergarten Education Scheme (KG Scheme), to announce the detailed arrangements for extending the maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks for eligible female staff with effect from January 1, 2019.

An EDB spokesman said, "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address proposed to extend the statutory maternity leave from the current 10 weeks to 14 weeks. Though the Government needs time to amend the relevant ordinance, to promote the spirit of good employer, the EDB has decided to introduce a new measure to aided schools including special schools, caput and DSS schools, to extend maternity leave to 14 weeks. The EDB also encourages kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme to provide 14 weeks of paid maternity leave to their eligible staff.

"Staff within the approved establishment of aided schools or contract staff remunerated by aided schools paid out of other EDB grants (i.e. cash grants), as well as staff of caput and DSS schools, may benefit from the 14 weeks of paid maternity leave if they have completed not less than 40 weeks of continuous service immediately before taking the maternity leave and their actual date of confinement or expected date of confinement falls on January 1, 2019 or after. The EDB also provides resources to support kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme to extend the paid maternity leave of their staff to 14 weeks."

Schools with staff members on maternity leave may need to maintain effective operation through the employment of supply staff. Under the new initiative, the EDB will pertinently provide schools with a grant for reimbursement of related expenses arising from the employment of supply staff. Kindergartens which have joined the KG Scheme will also be provided with this grant if they extend the paid maternity leave of their staff to 14 weeks and employ supply staff. The details are set out in EDB Circular No 16/2018 "Extension of Maternity Leave for Staff in Aided, Caput and Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools" and EDB Circular No 17/2018 "Kindergarten Education Scheme – Maternity Leave for Staff and Staff Relief Grant".

The spokesman said that as always the EDB encourages schools to promote family-friendly practices and fulfil their obligations as good employers. The extension of paid maternity leave to 14 weeks may allow mothers more time to take care of their newborn babies. Schools should implement this new measure and make known the arrangements regarding the extension of maternity leave as set out in the circulars to all their staff.

For enquiries, schools and their staff may contact the respective District School Development Sections or Joint Office for Kindergartens and Child Care Centres of the EDB.