

LD urges employers and employees to make prior work arrangements for typhoons and rainstorms

As Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 (T8) will soon be in force, the Labour Department (LD) today (October 9) reminded employers to make work arrangements for staff during and after tropical cyclone and rainstorm warnings, including arrangements on reporting for duty, release from work, resumption of work and work from home (if applicable).

An LD spokesman said, "In drawing up and implementing the work arrangements, apart from factors such as operational needs of establishments, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety and the feasibility for employees to travel to and from their workplaces. Employers should also give consideration as much as possible to the different situations faced by individual employees, such as their place of residence and the road and traffic conditions in the vicinity, and adopt a sympathetic and flexible approach with due regard to their actual difficulties and needs. For example, employers may permit employees who have difficulties in returning to workplaces to work from home or allow more time for them to report for duty and resume work.

"Under special situations, if it is necessary for employees to report for duty at workplaces under adverse weather conditions, employers should work out arrangements for their transportation, safety, meal, rest place and more. If public transport services are suspended or limited when T8 or higher is in force, employers should provide safe transport services for employees travelling to and from workplaces, or grant them an extra travelling allowance."

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.

The LD has published 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 making the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement, 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).

Classes of all day schools are suspended

As the Hong Kong Observatory announced that the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal no.8 is expected to be issued at or before 6.40am today (October 9), classes of all day schools are suspended today.

HKETO, Brussels promotes Hong Kong's business opportunities in respect of I&T and cultural industries in Spain (with photo)

The Special Representative for Hong Kong Economic and Trade Affairs to the European Union of the HKETO, Brussels, Mr Eddie Cheung met with the Director General of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce, Ms Inmaculada Riera, and the Chamber's International Director, Mr Jaime Montalvo, on October 7 (Madrid time) in Madrid, Spain. At the meeting, Mr Cheung highlighted initiatives announced by the Chief Executive in her Policy Address in respect of Innovation and Technology (I&T) and cultural industries.

Mr Cheung highlighted that Hong Kong has been committed to promote the development of I&T, of which research and development (R&D) is an important and indivisible component. The expansion of Hong Kong Science Park and the robust Intellectual Property regime in Hong Kong would provide a safe and fertile field for R&D. As a stepping stone to Asian markets, Hong Kong would be an ideal testing ground for Spanish entrepreneurs.

The two parties also explored collaboration opportunities between Hong Kong and Spain in the cultural industries, including the entertainment field in order to create the immense business opportunities. Presenting the souvenir stamps featuring Bruce Lee, the legendary movie star of Hong Kong, Mr Cheung mentioned that Hong Kong is developing into an East-meets-West Centre for International Cultural Exchange. While films could well showcase the uniqueness of Hong Kong's culture, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Brussels is supporting the screening of seven Hong Kong feature films at the 54th edition of the Sitges International Fantastic Film Festival of Catalonia, which is taking place in Sitges, Spain, from October 7 to 17 (Sitges time).

Mr Cheung presented a speech in Madrid to the participants in the South Summit which is the leading annual event in southern Europe for entrepreneurs and investors.



Mobile specimen collection stations continue to provide COVID-19 testing service to public

Having reviewed the usage and public demand for the COVID-19 testing service, the Government has decided to extend the service period of the following mobile specimen collection stations:

- the service period of the mobile specimen collection station at North Transition Deck, L6, Terminal 1 of Hong Kong International Airport will be extended to October 12 (Tuesday);
- the service period of the stations at Edinburgh Place in Central, Wong Tai Sin Square, Lai Kok Community Hall in Cheung Sha Wan, MacPherson Playground in Mong Kok, Sha Tsui Road Playground in Tsuen Wan and Tin Shui Sports Centre in Tin Shui Wai will be extended to October 24 (Sunday); and
- the service period of the station at Tung Chung North Park will be extended to October 31 (Sunday).

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above is hoisted, or the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day. Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal is hoisted while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all community testing centres (CTCs) will be closed

when the No. 8 Gale or Storm Signal or higher or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is hoisted.

Due to the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal no. 3, outdoor mobile specimen collection stations have been temporarily closed today (October 8). If the relevant signal is cancelled before or at noon tomorrow (October 9), the outdoor mobile stations will be gradually re-opened within several hours of cancellation of the signal; if the signal is cancelled after noon tomorrow, the outdoor mobile stations will not be re-opened that day, and persons who need to undergo COVID-19 testing may proceed to CTCs or indoor mobile specimen collection stations for testing.

CTCs provide testing services for the public, including free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm today, there were around 28 000 booking places available for tomorrow at the CTCs, and around 91 per cent and around 95 per cent availability for booking places for the coming seven days and 14 days respectively. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

Coupled with 18 CTCs, there will be a total of 26 CTCs/mobile specimen collection stations in various districts tomorrow to provide free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. The testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in the Annex. Persons subject to compulsory testing and those with the "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable).

People whose test results are negative will be informed by SMS message through their mobile phones. Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the relevant records properly. If any specimen tested shows a preliminarily positive COVID-19 result, the specimen will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the CHP.

The Government reminds the public that they can undergo COVID-19 testing through various means. For details, please refer to www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html. If a person has symptoms, he or she should seek medical attention immediately and should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or CTCs.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau urges all individuals who are

in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.

Finalised report of Hong Kong 2030+ promulgated

The Development Bureau and the Planning Department promulgated today (October 8) the finalised "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" (Hong Kong 2030+).

Hong Kong 2030+ sets out the territorial spatial development strategy for the city beyond 2030, with assessments on the overall demand and supply of land over a 30-year period from 2019 to 2048 and recommendations on sources of supply underpinned by a spatial planning framework.

The report projects the latest demand and supply of land for three broad categories of land uses over the projection period, viz housing, economic uses, as well as uses covering Government, Institution and Community (GIC) facilities, open space and transport infrastructure. It is projected that the overall demand for land would be about 6 200 hectares, considerably higher than the initial estimate of 4 800 hectares suggested in 2016. This is because the Government has taken a more visionary, forward looking and capacity creating approach in making the projection, assuming:

- an enhancement in home space when working out the overall land requirement for accommodating demand for an additional 1 million housing units, which would translate into average living space per person at 20 square metres/215 square feet (after an assumed 10 per cent home space enhancement) and 22 square metres/237 square feet (after an assumed 20 per cent home space enhancement);
- much stepped up demand for land to drive economic development leveraging on the opportunities arising from the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). It has assumed, for instance, a demand of at least 340 hectares of land for promoting the development of science, innovation and technology-related industries; and
- enhancement in the provision targets of GIC facilities, open space and transport infrastructure. For instance, the land per person ratio for open space has been increased to 3.5 square metres/38 square feet per person, higher than the assumed target of 2.5 square metres/27 square feet adopted in the Year 2016 round of projection and the actual provision of 2.7 square metres/29 square feet.

The Hong Kong 2030+ also reinforces the adoption of a multi-pronged land supply strategy, setting out overall land supply of 7 300 hectares. This estimated supply comprises a committed land supply of 3 200 hectares (largely supply to be generated from various land development projects which are ongoing or are at relatively advanced stages of planning) and possible solution spaces of about 4 100 hectares to be available in the medium to long term. The latter are regarded as "solution spaces" because they would help address the 3 000 hectares of land shortfall when one takes the projected demand minus the committed land supply.

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, said: "While the projected supply is higher than the projected demand, it should be prudent for the Government to make its best endeavours in taking forward the planning of this forecast supply. We need a buffer to cater for the possibility of certain sources of supply not being realised in quantum and/or timing due to feasibility or other reasons, and to better equip the city in meeting unforeseen circumstances and new demands that may come our way."

Also speaking on the report, the Director of Planning, Mr Ivan Chung, said that Hong Kong 2030+ formulates a conceptual spatial framework for the future development of Hong Kong.

"It shows a close-knit network of two metropolises (i.e. the Harbour Metropolis and the Northern Metropolis) and two development axes (i.e. Western Economic Corridor and Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor) with existing, committed and proposed urban nodes, and the conceptual transport links. The majority of solution spaces comes from potential supply from the two Metropolises, including 1 000 hectares from Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands representing an expansion of the Harbour Metropolis and close to 2 300 hectares from the Northern Metropolis," Mr Chung said.

"The conceptual spatial framework will help us achieve agglomeration of economic activities for better synergy, offer opportunities for retrofitting the dense urban core and bring jobs closer to homes."

Mr Wong added: "The finalised report demonstrates the Government's staunch commitment to responding to the needs and aspirations of the society and fostering inclusive growth, while capitalising on the opportunities brought by the National 14th Five-year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the GBA."

The finalised Hong Kong 2030+ report is available at Planning Department's website:

www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/p_study/comp_s/hk2030plus/index.htm.