

Government reminds members of public commencement of Vaccine Pass third stage next Tuesday

The third stage of the Vaccine Pass will commence next Tuesday (May 31). The Government reminds members of the public who are not yet compliant with the requirement of the third stage of the Vaccine Pass to receive the respective dosage of vaccine before May 31. At the same time, other members of the public who are eligible to receive the third dose should receive the third dose as soon as possible in order to strengthen protection early. There is no need for them to wait until the six-month grace period under the Vaccine Pass expired.

After the commencement of the third stage of the Vaccine Pass, the following persons are compliant with the vaccination requirements to continue to use the Vaccine Pass:

- (1) Ordinary persons: (a) Received three doses of vaccine; or
(b) Within six months after having received the second dose of vaccine;
- (2) Recovered persons: (a) Received three or two doses of vaccine;
(b) Within six months after recovery;
(c) Within six months after having received the first dose of vaccine after recovery; or
(d) Aged 12 to 17 and received one dose of Comirnaty vaccine;
- (3) Inbound travellers: Arrived in Hong Kong within six months and holding the Provisional Vaccine Pass; and
- (4) Persons who are verified to be unsuitable to receive vaccination by medical practitioners, and hold the COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate.

According to the recommendations by the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH), joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel, persons who are unsure if they had a previous COVID-19 infection or persons who do not have their recovery record in the DH's system may safely receive the next dose of vaccine no less than 28 days after recovery.

The current version of the vaccination record already includes the date of birth and the latest vaccination or recovery status of the vaccine recipient. Members of the public may download the latest version of vaccination record through the COVID-19 Electronic Vaccination and Testing Record System website (www.evt.gov.hk/portal/en/), the "eHealth" or "iAM Smart" mobile applications. The Government reminds members of the public (especially recovered persons who had received vaccination or adolescents

aged 12 to 17) to use the latest version of vaccination record (with date of birth and recovery record included) or medical exemption certificate, and store their relevant QR codes with the latest version of "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application. The current versions of "LeaveHomeSafe" and "QR Code Verification Scanner" mobile applications will automatically check whether the QR code provided is compliant with the requirements in accordance with the conditions under the relevant stage of the Vaccine Pass.

If members of the public have questions regarding the installation or use of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application, such as storing and display of the Vaccine Pass, they may call the "LeaveHomeSafe" telephone hotline (2626 3066) for enquiry. The hotline operates from 7am to 9pm daily. Members of the public may also visit the [mobile support stations of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer set up at 25 MTR stations](#) to seek assistance from staff, or learn about the details of using the application through the thematic webpage of "LeaveHomeSafe" (www.leavehomesafe.gov.hk/en/).

In view of the commencement of the third stage of the Vaccine Pass on May 31, and the next round of social distancing measures coming into effect on June 2, relevant government departments will conduct inspections at relevant premises during the subsequent long holiday after the adaptation period from 0.00am on May 31 to 0.00am on June 2, in order to determine whether specified premises comply with the relevant regulations under the Vaccine Pass, and whether relevant persons who enter or remain in those specified premises comply with the Vaccine Pass requirements.

"Vaccination is highly effective in preventing severe cases or deaths from COVID-19. The implementation of the Vaccine Pass arrangement aims to raise the vaccination rate, strengthen the immune barrier against the epidemic and allow Hong Kong people's way of life to continue to resume normalcy in an orderly manner. We strongly appeal to members of the public who have not been vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a much higher fatality risk after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated with no delay for the sake of their health. Members of the public who are currently eligible for a third or fourth dose should also get the dose as soon as possible," a Government spokesman said.

Note 1: For the vaccination requirements under the third stage of the Vaccine Pass for different categories of persons, please refer to the Government's [press release issued on May 17](#) and the Vaccine Pass thematic website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp_t1_ENG.pdf).

Note 2: Recovered persons refer to persons whose infection or recovery records had been declared and stored in the Government's system. For the arrangement of downloading the recovery record QR code, please refer to the Government's [press release issued on April 19](#) and the Vaccine Pass thematic website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp_recovery_qr_ENG.pdf).

Note 3: For the declaration of non-local vaccination record or recovery

record and the arrangement to obtain the Provisional Vaccine Pass for inbound travellers, please refer to the Government's [press releases issued on May 5 and 19](#) and the Vaccine Pass thematic website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/nonlocalvacc_ENG.pdf).

Note 4: For the arrangement to obtain the COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate, please refer to the Government's [press release issued on January 27](#) and the COVID-19 vaccination thematic website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme).

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened at a construction site in Tseung Kwan O this afternoon (May 26), in which a lift shaft metal working platform suddenly collapsed while it was being dismantled by a male worker on the ground. The worker was pressed by the collapsed working platform and injured. He was certified dead later in hospital. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expressed its deepest sympathy to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending dismantling of lift shaft metal working platforms on the site. The contractors cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risks have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete the investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety

practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and properly use personal protective equipment provided to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

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FHB announces the first incidence for latest smoking prevalence rate in Hong Kong to attain single digit

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, announced today (May 26) that the smoking prevalence rate in Hong Kong has dropped continuously from 23.3 per cent in the early 1980s to 9.5 per cent in 2021. It is the first time for the latest smoking prevalence rate to attain a single digit.

The Census and Statistics Department today published the latest Thematic Household Survey (THS) Report. According to the THS Report, about 581 000 persons were found to be daily conventional cigarette smokers at the time of the survey conducted from April to July last year, accounting for 9.5 per cent of the local population aged 15 and above. Corresponding figure in 2019 was 10.2 per cent.

"It is an important milestone in Hong Kong's tobacco control effort with the smoking prevalence rate dropped to a single digit, but yet we cannot afford complacency. We will continue to further reduce the smoking prevalence rate in Hong Kong proactively through multi-pronged approach, including legislation, taxation, health education and co-operation with community partners to take forward more focused smoking cessation services, so as to safeguard the health of Hong Kong citizens." Professor Chan said.

For alternative smoking products (ASPs), according to the THS Report, the percentage of daily electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) smokers aged 15 and above in the population was 0.3 per cent in 2021 (some 17 500 persons in actual figure), while the corresponding percentage was 0.1 per cent in 2019 (some 7 200 persons in actual figure). For heated tobacco products (HTPs), the survey found that the percentage of daily HTP smokers aged 15 and above in the population was 0.1 per cent (some 8 400 persons in actual figure), while the corresponding percentage was 0.2 per cent in 2019 (some 13 100 persons in actual figure).

On the other hand, the Food and Health Bureau commissioned the School of Public Health of the University of Hong Kong to conduct a school-based survey from December 2020 to December 2021 on smoking pattern among Primary and Secondary students (HKU Study). According to the HKU Study, the smoking prevalence rate among Primary and Secondary students remained low, but the percentage of Secondary students smoking e-cigarettes has increased. The HKU Study also found that 1.1 per cent of Secondary 1 to Secondary 6 students claimed in the 2020/21 school year that they were smoking e-cigarettes at the time, while 0.8 per cent was recorded in 2019.

Professor Chan pointed out that given the harm of ASPs posed to local public health, it is necessary for the Government to take action even when the number of ASP smokers among Primary and Secondary students remained low, and to ban ASPs through legislation so as to stop them from further infiltrating Hong Kong before it becomes popular in Hong Kong. Since the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 (Amendment Ordinance) came into effect on April 30, 2022, no person may import, promote, manufacture, sell, or possess for commercial purposes ASPs, including e-cigarettes, HTPs and herbal cigarettes. The Government hopes that the prevalence rate of using ASPs will decrease with the Amendment Ordinance coming into effect.

Looking ahead, Professor Chan said that the Government will enhance tobacco control measures, including measures to reduce non-smokers from picking up the smoking habit and provide full support to smokers to quit smoking, in a comprehensive manner with a view to further lowering smoking prevalence rate. The Government will also work closely with various partners to strengthen public education and research projects so as to explore new initiatives to enhance smoking cessation services, especially those services and relevant policy measures targeting adolescent, women, as well as e-cigarette and HTP smokers. The Department of Health will launch the "Quit in June" campaign, and work in collaboration with the Hospital Authority, District Health Centres/District Health Centre Expresses, the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health and other medical institutions in assisting people to quit smoking and promoting tobacco-free life.

"In order to achieve the long-term goal of eliminating smoking hazard, the Government will make reference to experiences from other places and actively carry out the formulation of Tobacco Endgame, provide a timetable and roadmap, and launch a comprehensive tobacco control strategy to safeguard public health. The Government is exploring along the directions of reducing public exposure to second-hand smoke, curtailing the attractiveness of smoking products and eliminating the harm of smoking products to the next generation. The Government plans to consult the public on the proposal within this year. The next-term Government will continue to promote tobacco control work with a view to achieving a smoke-free Hong Kong," Professor Chan said.

Further extension of application period of Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in Property Management Sector

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) announced today (May 26) that the Government will extend the application period of the Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in the Property Management Sector (ASPM) to June 30.

The HAD launched the ASPM with the aim to provide each frontline property management (PM) worker performing duties relating to environmental hygiene or security in private residential, composite (i.e. commercial cum residential), industrial and commercial (including shopping malls) building blocks (hereinafter referred to as "eligible building blocks") a monthly allowance of \$2,000 for five months (February to June 2022)

The HAD spokesman expressed that, since the launch of the ASPM on February 28, HAD had been keeping in view the needs of the PM sector, and announced enhancement measures on April 29. HAD also jointly organised recently a briefing session via video conferencing with the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA) for the PM sector, to remind the trade the details of the enhancement measures and application method of the ASPM. Given the large number of premises within eligible building blocks, HAD understood that PM companies, Deed of Mutual Covenant Managers or Owners' Corporations/Organisations would require time to collect and collate frontline PM worker applications submitted by premises, and therefore decided to further extend the application due date to June 30, so that the PM sector can have more time to submit applications, benefiting more frontline PM workers.

As at May 26, the PMSA has received more than 17 000 applications, which will benefit over 180 000 frontline PM workers, and over 2 700 applications have been approved, involving nearly \$600 million, benefiting over 6 200 buildings.

The HAD thanked the PM sector for actively responding and supporting the enhancement measures under the ASPM, and appealed strongly again to eligible applicant organisations and premises to uphold corporate social responsibility and civic responsibility, following an inclusive and fair principle, and submit applications for all frontline PM workers serving eligible building blocks (including premises therein) to the PMSA promptly, so that they can receive subsidies as soon as possible.

For details on the ASPM, please contact the PMSA at 3696 1156 or 3696 1166, or visit the ASPM thematic website (aspm.pmsa.org.hk).