

# Employers and employees should take precautions against heat stroke

As the Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate precautions to prevent heat stroke when working in a hot or humid environment.

Heat stroke could occur if an employee works in a hot or humid environment for prolonged periods of time, as the body may fail to regulate its temperature by effective heat dissipation through sweating. The symptoms of heat-related illnesses include feeling thirsty, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, muscle spasm or even mental confusion, and loss of consciousness or convulsion in severe cases.

Construction workers, cleaning workers, kitchen workers and porters, for example, are more prone to heat stroke as they may be working for long hours in such an environment, especially if appropriate preventive measures have not been taken.

The LD reminds employers to arrange for a suitable assessment of the risk of heat stress in the work environment and take appropriate preventive measures. The LD has produced a booklet entitled "Risk Assessment for the Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" as well as two leaflets entitled "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Construction Sites" and "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Outdoor Cleansing Workplaces" respectively. Employers are advised to refer to these publications when assessing the employees' risk of heat stress at their workplaces.

In addition to the publications on risk assessment, the LD has produced a leaflet entitled "Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work in a Hot Environment" for the public. The publications can be obtained free of charge from the offices of the Occupational Health Service of the LD, or downloaded from the department's webpage at [www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2\\_9.htm](http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_9.htm).

The LD also reminds employers and employees to take the following precautions to prevent heat stroke:

## Employers

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- (1) Take heed of the weather report and adopt shift work arrangements for employees to reduce their exposure to the hot environment, or arrange appropriate rest breaks for them during very hot periods;
- (2) Avoid working under direct sunlight and set up temporary sunshade wherever possible;
- (3) Provide cool potable water for employees at all times during work. If necessary, provide drinks containing electrolytes for employees to replenish loss of salt during profuse sweating;

- (4) Minimise physical demands by using tools or mechanical aids at work;
- (5) Increase air flow by enhancing ventilation or air-conditioning as appropriate;
- (6) Isolate heat-generating facilities at the workplace and use insulating materials to minimise heat dissipation to the other work areas; and
- (7) Provide relevant information and training for employees on heat stroke such as preventive measures and first aid treatment.

## Employees

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- (1) Wear clothing made of suitable materials (for example, cotton) that is loose-fitting and light-coloured to help heat dissipation, minimise heat absorption and allow sweat evaporation;
- (2) Wear a wide-brimmed hat when working outdoors;
- (3) Drink plenty of water or appropriate beverages with electrolytes to replenish the fluids and salt lost through sweating; and
- (4) Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, rest in a cool or shady place and drink water, and inform supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD also urges employers to provide for employees as far as practicable covered space with good ventilation for rest and meals. Furthermore, some employees may have difficulty in adapting to a hot working environment owing to their own health conditions. Employers should take this into account and consider the recommendations of their doctors when assigning work to these employees.

The LD organises occupational health talks in public places and at its own training venues regularly to raise employers' and employees' awareness of occupational health. Details of the health talk on the prevention of heat stroke at work in a hot environment in May and June are as follows:

### (A)

Dates and Time: May 12 and 24; June 2 and 23 (Half-day (am));  
May 3, 4, 16 and 23; June 7, 16 and 29 (Half-day (pm))  
Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour Department,  
13/F, KOLOUR·Tsuen Wan I, 68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories

### (B)

Dates and Time: May 24; June 8 and 22 (Half-day (am))  
Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Centre of the Labour Department,  
G/F, Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong,  
Kowloon  
(MTR Kwun Tong Station Exit A1)

### (C)

Date and Time: May 11 (3.30pm to 5pm)  
Venue: Lecture Theatre, Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road,  
Causeway Bay  
(Opposite Victoria Park, MTR Tin Hau Station Exit B)

(D)

Date and Time: June 16 (3.30pm to 5pm)

Venue: Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road,

Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

(MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station Exit E)

For enrolment or enquiries about the occupational health talk, please call 2852 4040 or 2361 8240 (for a talk organised at the Occupational Safety and Health Centre). Moreover, the LD also provides an outreach health education service and occupational health nurses will, on invitation, disseminate occupational health information at workplaces at a convenient time. Please contact the nursing officer at 2852 4062 for details. All these health talks are free of charge.

Infection control measures taking into account the latest COVID-19 epidemic developments will be adopted at the venues. All of the occupational health public talks require preregistration.

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## **Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Lai Kit Lau, Lai Tak Tsuen, Tai Hang**

The Government yesterday (April 28) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 4pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tai Hang (i.e. Lai Kit Lau, Lai Tak Tsuen, Tai Hang) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past three months, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, were not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise. In addition, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any persons, other than those specified above, who had been present at the building for more than two hours from April 22 to April 28, 2022, to undergo compulsory testing

on or before April 30, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect.

The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 10am today (April 29) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 10am today, persons in the specified "restricted area" in Tai Hang who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 9pm yesterday. During the exercise, 932 people within the "restricted area" had undergone testing, among which 14 cases tested positive were found. The Centre for Health Protection of the DH will arrange to follow up.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit 484 households in the "restricted area", among which 75 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$10,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

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## **Deadline approaching for 2023-24 flag days applications**

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) reminds charitable organisations wishing to hold flag days from April 2023 to March 2024 that the deadline for submitting applications is 6pm on May 12 this year.

The application form for flag days together with the explanatory notes can be downloaded from the SWD's website at [www.swd.gov.hk](http://www.swd.gov.hk). The completed application form together with the required documents should reach the

Lotteries Fund Projects Section of the SWD at Rooms 3601-02, 36/F, Dah Sing Financial Centre, 248 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, by 6pm on May 12 this year. Applications for flag days in 2023-24 can also be submitted online. Please refer to the SWD's website for application details. Late applications will not be considered.

Enquiries can be made by telephone to 2832 4318 or 2832 4301; by fax to 2838 0441; or by email to [eolf5@swd.gov.hk](mailto:eolf5@swd.gov.hk).

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## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority closely monitors the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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## **Government enforces "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Chi Mei House, Choi Hung Estate, Wong Tai Sin**

The Government yesterday (April 28) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 4.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Wong Tai Sin (i.e. Chi Mei House, Choi Hung Estate, Wong Tai Sin, excluding non-domestic units on G/F) were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the

"restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained.

In addition, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from April 22 to April 28, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before April 30, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 8am today (April 29) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 8am today, persons in the specified "restricted area" in Wong Tai Sin who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 9pm yesterday. A total of about 1 100 persons had undergone testing. Amongst them, four tested positive cases and two indeterminate cases were found and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will take follow-up action. Regarding cases tested positive in the specified "restricted area", the Government will provide health advice for persons tested positive pending admission to hospitals or isolation facilities, disinfection products and surgical masks to these persons and their household members pending follow-up arrangement.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit about 730 households within the "restricted area", among which 151 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$10,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.