

## LCQ2: Registration and disciplinary matters of social workers

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Che-cheung and a reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

In recent years, a number of registered social workers were convicted of the offences of unlawful assembly or assault on police officers, and were sentenced to imprisonment. Some organisations have lodged complaints to the Social Workers Registration Board (the Board), which is responsible for the registration and disciplinary matters of social workers, demanding the Board to cancel the registration of such persons as a social worker. However, the Board has rejected their demand on the grounds that the offences concerned do not constitute professional misconduct. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) Whether it knows the number of registered social workers who were convicted of any criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment in the past three years, with a breakdown by type of offences involved and term of imprisonment; among them, the number of those whose registration as a social worker was subsequently cancelled;

(2) Whether it knows if any of those sentenced to imprisonment mentioned in (1) were at that time members of the Board; if some of them were, whether the Board has cancelled their registration as a social worker; if the Board has not, whether the Government will request the Board to review the relevant decisions and the effectiveness of the work of the Committee on Professional Conduct under it, so as to avoid giving members of the public the perception that the Board harbours its members; and

(3) Whether the Government will review the functions and composition of the Board, and improve the Board's mechanisms for handling complaints against social workers and for disciplining convicted social workers, so as to allay public concern; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Social Workers Registration Board is a statutory body established under the Social Workers Registration Ordinance enacted in 1997. The Ordinance stipulates that the Board shall consist of 15 members and serve on a three-year term. Eight of the members shall be registered social workers elected by registered social workers; six members shall be appointed by the Chief Executive, of whom not less than three shall be persons who are neither a registered social worker nor a public officer; and one member shall be the

Director of Social Welfare or his/her representative. The Board is empowered to set and review the qualification standards for the registration of social workers, formulate and approve codes of practice, administer the registration system and handle disciplinary matters. The Board may decide whether persons convicted of criminal offences can be registered as registered social workers. That notwithstanding, if the person concerned is convicted of any serious offences stipulated in Schedule 2 of the Ordinance, including incest, rape, murder, abduction of child or juvenile, etc., the Board shall refuse to register the person concerned unless with the agreement of all members of the Board. For the handling of complaints against registered social workers, the Board shall appoint disciplinary committees to conduct hearings and recommend actions to be taken to the Board, which will make the final decision in respect of the complaint.

My reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) According to the information provided by the Board, from January 2018 to April 2021, a total of seven registered social workers have reported to the Board that they have been convicted of criminal offences with sentences of imprisonment. None of them had his/her name removed from the Register so far, nor were any of them a member of the Board. Of these seven persons, the Board is deliberating on the case of one of them; two persons are awaiting the court's verdict on their appeals; one person did not apply for registration renewal; and the Board decided that the convictions of the remaining three persons would not affect their registration renewal. The offences involved of the seven persons are not listed on Schedule 2 of the Ordinance. The breakdown of the offences and sentences concerned is listed in the Annex.

(3) The Board is a statutory body, and its constitution, powers, functions, registration requirements and disciplinary proceedings have been stipulated in the Ordinance. So long as the Board acts in accordance with the Ordinance on disciplinary control of social workers and related matters, it would not be appropriate for the Government to intervene. In light of the different views in the community on the Board's work, the Government will recommend the Board to consider appropriate measures to enhance its operational transparency and strengthen its communication with stakeholders.

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## Firing practice for June 2021

Firing practice will take place at two military sites, namely the San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range and the Tsing Shan Firing Range, next month (June).

Red flags or red lamps will be hoisted at the firing areas before and during firing practice. For their safety, people are advised not to enter the firing area.

Following are the dates and times for the firing practice sessions in June 2021:

San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range

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Date	Time
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June 1 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 2 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 3 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 4 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 7 (Monday)	8am-9pm
June 8 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 9 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 10 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 11 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 15 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 16 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 17 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 18 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 21 (Monday)	8am-9pm
June 22 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 23 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 24 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 25 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 28 (Monday)	8am-9pm
June 29 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 30 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm

Tsing Shan Firing Range

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Date	Time
June 1 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 2 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 3 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 4 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 7 (Monday)	8am-9pm
June 8 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 9 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 10 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 11 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 15 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 16 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 17 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 18 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 21 (Monday)	8am-9pm
June 22 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
June 23 (Wednesday)	8am-9pm
June 24 (Thursday)	8am-9pm
June 25 (Friday)	8am-9pm
June 28 (Monday)	8am-9pm
June 29 (Tuesday)	8am-9pm
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# CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (May 26) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;

- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming, sweating or toweling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.

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## [Assess the risk of heat stroke to employees](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force, they should assess the risk of heat stroke to their employees and adopt effective preventive measures such as providing cool drinking water, setting up temporary sunshade, providing mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion of employees and providing for employees as far as practicable covered space with good ventilation for rest and meals. Employees should drink water regularly and be mindful of their physical condition. If early heat stroke symptoms such as headache and thirst appear, they should rest in a cool or shady place and drink water immediately. They should also inform their supervisors to take appropriate action.