

# Very Hot Weather Warning issued

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

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## Government responds to an online article on “Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021”

Regarding a recent unfounded online commentary on the "Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021" (the Bill), the Government clarified as follows:

(1) The Bill does not intend to pave way for the introduction of Mainland doctors

The Government has repeatedly emphasised that those who wish to become a doctor with special registration must be a Hong Kong permanent resident. The purpose of the Bill is to attract Hong Kong permanent residents, who are doctors in any place outside Hong Kong, to return to Hong Kong and serve in the public healthcare sector.

(2) Licensing Examination is not the only way to assess the quality of doctors, and non-locally trained Hong Kong doctors are subject to multiple supervisions

At present, many countries in the world (such as Singapore and Australia) have different mechanisms to attract non-locally trained doctors. Subject to fulfillment of certain criteria, non-locally trained doctors will be granted full registration in the respective countries. Passing the

examinations is not the only condition for obtaining full registration. The Government reiterated that the amendment of the Ordinance is not intended to abolish the current licensing examination system, but to create a new pathway for qualified non-locally trained doctors to practise in the public healthcare sector of Hong Kong on the premise of ensuring the quality of doctors.

In fact, doctors with special registration are subject to multiple supervisions to ensure quality, including:

- (a) he/she holds a recognised medical qualification awarded by a non-local medical school and possesses medical registration in any place where the non-local medical schools concerned are located;
- (b) for those who already have a specialist qualification, their medical qualifications must be recognised by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) as equivalent to a local specialist qualification;
- (c) for those who have yet to obtain a specialist qualification, he/she must complete or continue his/her specialist training in Hong Kong. HKAM and its constituent specialty Colleges will monitor their performance before awarding specialist qualifications; and
- (d) he/she has to work in public healthcare institutions for at least five years after obtaining specialist qualification and must undergo continuous on-the-job assessments to ensure that he/she performs well and is capable to be a doctor.

In comparison, locally trained doctors can obtain full registration after completing the internship. The Government is actually imposing a higher requirement on non-locally trained doctors.

(3) The current registration system is ineffective, causing the number of non-locally trained doctors to drop significantly

Before September 1996, non-locally trained doctors were an important source of the doctor supply. After that, all non-locally trained doctors are required to pass the Licensing Examination administered by the Medical Council of Hong Kong (Medical Council) and complete a specified period of assessment before they can be registered with full registration for practising in Hong Kong. As a result, the proportion of newly registered doctors with non-local medical qualifications dropped significantly from an average of 56 per cent for the five years between 1992 and 1996 to an average of 13 per cent for the five years between 2015 and 2019.

The reasons for the small numbers of doctors qualified to practise in Hong Kong through the Licensing Examination route are manifold but the hurdles presented by the Licensing Examination are obvious. On the other hand, while non-locally trained doctors may be admitted under the limited registration scheme to practise in Hong Kong, the uncertainty associated with renewal of registration every three years and the restriction to work in a specified institution are obviously disincentives.

(4) The Bill does not bypass the Medical Council

The Government respects the Medical Council's statutory function to regulate doctors. Taking into account that the Medical Council is a major stakeholder in the medical profession, the Government proposed to establish the Special Registration Committee, which will determine the list of recognised medical qualifications, under the Medical Council. Also, the committee will comprise, among others, four representatives from the Medical Council, including the Chairman of the Medical Council and three other members. Non-locally trained doctors who will practise in Hong Kong through the new pathway will still need to register under the Medical Council and will be subject to its disciplinary regulation like other local doctors.

(5) The Government is actively strengthening public medical services via various measures

The Government reckons that the public healthcare system is facing many challenges, with manpower of doctors being one of them. Some structural problems would need to be dealt with separately to improve public healthcare services. In fact, the Government is actively enhancing public healthcare services through various measures, including promoting public-private partnership so as to tap into the capacity of the private healthcare sector, thereby alleviating the pressure on the public healthcare sector; and promoting primary healthcare and strengthening co-ordination among various professions, sectors and organisations in the primary healthcare area with a view to alleviating the pressure on public hospitals.

The Government plans to submit the Bill to the Legislative Council for deliberation on June 2. To cope with challenges in healthcare services in relation to the growing and ageing population, the Government hopes that members of the Legislative Council and the community could support the Bill so that more non-locally trained Hong Kong doctors can return and serve the Hong Kong community.

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## [Government responds to use of COVID-19 vaccines](#)

Regarding a media report which claimed that Hong Kong will throw away millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses due to low vaccination rate, a Government spokesman responded today (May 25) as follows:

So far, the Government has procured and authorised a total of 15 million doses of the Sinovac and Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccines (Note 1) for emergency use. The procured quantity is sufficient for vaccination by the entire population of Hong Kong.

As at May 24, over 2.17 million doses of vaccines had been administered to members of the public (940 000 doses of the Sinovac vaccine and 1.23

million doses of the Comirnaty vaccine). Among them, over 1.26 million persons had received their first dose of vaccine, accounting for 19.3 per cent of the population aged 16 or above.

As at the same day, out of the two million odd doses each of the Sinovac and Comirnaty vaccine which have arrived in Hong Kong (Note 2), there are 1.05 million and 840 000 unused doses respectively. The Comirnaty vaccine needs to be stored in an ultra-low temperature setting and the vaccines have a relatively short expiry date from the date of manufacture (around three to four months after arrival in Hong Kong). The Comirnaty vaccines now in storage will expire in mid-August this year. If the quantity of uptake falls short of the quantity in storage, some of the precious vaccines will be wasted. We observed that the public's demand for the Comirnaty vaccine has gradually become sluggish recently. Compared with the daily capacity of over 40 000 doses in Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs), there are only on average around 10 000 persons per day to make online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Comirnaty vaccine.

To avoid wastage amid tight global supply, the Government will, based on the vaccination and appointment trends, estimate the quantity of vaccines that may become excessive, and discuss with the drug manufacturers on how to handle the expected surplus doses which will be unused in this year's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme or before the expiry date of the vaccines, including postponing or cancelling delivery of certain batches or donating them to places which are more in need of the vaccines through channels such as the World Health Organization COVAX Facility. As it takes time for the production of vaccines, quality control, and transport and logistics, etc, even if the demand for vaccines by members of the public suddenly surges later on, it would not be possible for the relevant vaccines to be replenished within this year.

"Vaccination is not only the most effective and thorough measure for preventing and controlling COVID-19 but also the key to overcoming the epidemic, resuming normal ways of life and early resumption of cross-boundary travel as early as possible. We call on members of the public not to delay and get vaccinated as soon as possible while current stock lasts and the service capacity is still sufficient at the CVCs," the spokesman added.

Note 1: Each person should receive two doses.

Note 2: The two million odd doses of Comirnaty vaccine that have arrived in Hong Kong do not include the 1.19 million odd doses that had to be returned to the German manufacturer BioNTech due to packaging defects.

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## **Labour Department highly concerned**

## about fatal work accident that happened today (2)

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a work accident that happened at a landfill in Ta Kwu Ling today (May 25), in which a male worker was trapped between a wheel and the platform of a dumper. He was admitted to hospital and certified dead later in the hospital. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and expresses its deepest sympathies 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 will issue suspension notices to the occupier of the premises and contractors concerned, suspending the repair and maintenance work of dumpers at the landfill as well as the use of the dumper concerned. The occupier and contractors cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk 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 Occupational Safety and Health 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 fine of \$200,000 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, reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent a 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 use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of

other workers.

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## **Homicide and suicide in Lantau North**

Police are investigating a homicide and suicide case in Lantau North today (May 25) in which a 22-year-old man and a 22-year-old woman were certified dead.

At 11.37am, a 21-year-old woman made a report to the Police that she was unable to contact her 22-year-old male friend.

Officers sped to the 22-year-old man's residence located in a unit of Mun Shun House, Mun Tung Estate and found the man and the 22-year-old woman lying unconsciously in the unit. The couple were certified dead at scene.

Initial investigation revealed that the woman sustained injuries to her neck and hands and was suspected of being attacked by the man. The man later committed suicide by hanging with nylon rope.

A nylon rope in suspected connection with the case was found inside the unit.

Post-mortem examinations will be conducted later to ascertain the cause of their deaths.

Active investigation by the District Crime Squad of Lantau District is under way.