

Government announces latest Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards

The Government announced today (April 22) the latest Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards (HKDWS).

Hong Kong has adopted the respective guideline values/provisional guideline values in the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality as the HKDWS since September 2017. With reference to the WHO's advocacy, the Government commissioned an expert consultant earlier on to conduct a review, including making reference to international practices, to establish a set of drinking water standards suitable for adoption in the local context. Based on the expert consultant's findings and recommendations, the Government has formulated the latest HKDWS which has been deliberated and agreed by the Drinking Water Safety Advisory Committee (DWSAC).

The number of water quality parameters in the latest HKDWS is revised from 92 to 60, which includes the addition of two new parameters, namely perchlorate and total trihalomethanes, and the exclusion of 34 irrelevant parameters.

The newly added parameters have been established in accordance with the latest WHO Guidelines. As for the excluded parameters, they have all along been found undetectable under the routine water quality monitoring programme of the Water Supplies Department (WSD), indicating that their levels were negligible, if not nil, in the drinking water of Hong Kong, which were far below a level that would cause an adverse health risk. Nevertheless, the WSD will continue the surveillance of these excluded parameters in the drinking water. In addition, with reference to the WHO Guidelines, the Government has adopted more stringent standards for chlorate and dichloroacetate in the latest HKDWS.

The latest HKDWS are detailed at Annex I, while the excluded parameters are detailed at Annex II.

With reference to the monitoring practices on drinking water quality adopted by international organisations and overseas countries, the expert consultant also recommended additional water samples for monitoring residual chlorine and E. coli be collected through the current Enhanced Water Quality Monitoring Programme (Enhanced Programme). The recommendation has also been deliberated and agreed by the DWSAC.

The WSD has implemented the Enhanced Programme since 2017 to randomly select about 670 premises each year from water accounts over the territory for collecting drinking water samples from their taps to test for six metals viz. antimony, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead and nickel. Starting from next month, the WSD will extend the scope of the Enhanced Programme to cover the testing of residual chlorine and E. coli in drinking water samples.

The public may visit the WSD website (www.wsd.gov.hk/en/dwsewqmp) for updated information on the Enhanced Programme.

Latest arrangements for LCSD recreation and sports programmes

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (April 22) that, in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, some recreation and sports programmes will gradually resume from May 3 (Monday), including training courses and fun days to be held at the sports premises of indoor and outdoor venues, public swimming pools as well as water sports centres.

Enrolment for the programmes via the District Leisure Services Offices, leisure venues with Leisure Link Services, Leisure Link Internet services and self-service kiosks will start from April 27 (Tuesday).

Details of the programmes are being uploaded onto the LCSD website (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/programmes/programmeslist/districtsports/searchrsprog.php). Members of the public may also call 1823 or any District Leisure Services Offices for enquiries.

Red flags hoisted at some beaches

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (April 22) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

[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 service demand surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

[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 Kowloon Bay this afternoon (April 21), in which a male worker, while assisting in concreting work, was struck by a concrete bucket being lifted by a lorry-mounted crane. He was injured and certified dead 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 contractors concerned, suspending all construction work at the work area concerned. The 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 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 safe 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, 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.