

[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 is closely monitoring 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.

[Yellow fire danger warning](#)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (February 20) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

[Territory-wide flag-selling activity cancelled](#)

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by Hong Kong Playground Association that the territory-wide flag-selling activity in public places scheduled to be held today (February 20) has been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the Public Subscription Permit issued by the SWD, including any updated information, have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search).

For enquiries, please contact Miss Siu of the organisation at 2573 3849.

[Scientific Committees under CHP publish consensus interim recommendations on use of CoronaVac vaccine in Hong Kong](#)

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (SCEZD) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH) (JSC) yesterday (February 19) published the consensus interim recommendations on the use of the CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccine (CoronaVac) by Sinovac Biotech (Hong Kong) Limited (Sinovac) in Hong Kong .

The Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines (AP) has submitted its recommendations to the Secretary for Food and Health earlier on and considered that, under the current epidemic situation, the benefits of authorising the use of the COVID-19 vaccine by Sinovac for protecting against COVID-19 outweigh the risks. The AP recommended that the appropriateness of using CoronaVac in elderly of 60 years old or above should be advised by the JSC.

The JSC, convened a meeting yesterday, joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (EAP), to provide interim recommendations to the Government on the use of CoronaVac in Hong Kong. Thus far, phase 3 clinical studies of CoronaVac have not been published in peer-reviewed journals. The JSC-EAP reviewed the data and information available, based on materials submitted to the AP by Sinovac.

The interim recommendation might be updated based on additional safety and efficacy data from Phase 3 clinical trials, international developments and conditions of emergency use approval in Hong Kong.

With regard to the use of CoronaVac for individuals aged 60 or above, the JSC-EAP considered that the benefit of using CoronaVac vaccine generally exceeds the risk of not using any vaccines in persons aged 60 or above.

The joint meeting also deliberated the impact of vaccine delivery on non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) and considered that at the current phase of the vaccination programme there is limited evidence on the effects of vaccination on preventing transmission and there are constraints in vaccine availability. Population level protection will not be achieved in the

short term.

The joint meeting agreed that vaccination is only one of the tools in the overall public health response to COVID-19. The combination of NPIs with vaccination will allow for maximum protection against the virus. There is a need to continue public health strategies on NPIs, including social distancing, good hand hygiene and wearing a mask in public, to reduce the risk of transmission.

NPIs should continue to be followed by vaccinated individuals, as well as those who have not yet been vaccinated. Any changes to NPIs should be carefully monitored. Delays in vaccine supply and suboptimal vaccine uptake would mean that NPI measures would need to be kept in place for longer.

Details of the interim recommendation are available at CHP website www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html.

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 housing estate in Tai Wai, Shatin this afternoon (February 19), in which a male worker while performing drainage work on an upper floor of a building fell from height onto the 1/F canopy. He was certified dead on the spot. 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 issued suspension notices to the contractors concerned, suspending any work-above-ground activity at the stairways of the building. 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.