

# 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 and providing mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion of employees. 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 actions.

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## 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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# Hospital Authority announces two incidents of interruptions of the negative pressure system in isolation wards

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for Hospital Authority (HA) made the following announcement today (June 15) concerning two incidents of interruptions of the negative pressure system in isolation wards:

At 11.03am today, there was a power interruption at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital. The safety device of the power supply system terminated power supply. Ventilation system was interrupted owing to the suspension of power supply triggered the alarm of the negative pressure system of isolation wards because of pressure change. The system resumed normal at 11.35am after checking by on-site staff of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). It was later reported that the ventilation system was suspended again due to tripping of power supply at 2.25pm, affecting the negative pressure setting in one of the isolation wards. There were five inpatients staying in the concerned ward, including a confirmed COVID-19 patient who was admitted to a single isolation room. As a precautionary measure, the hospital has arranged patients transfer from the concerned ward to other isolation wards. The concerned isolation ward has also been closed for a thorough checkup and repair.

During the incident, no healthcare worker was inside the isolation room and no high-risk procedure was performed. All healthcare staff working outside the cubicle were equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment. The infection risk has been assessed to be very low.

In addition, at 10.57 am today, while technicians of the EMSD were carrying out repair work at the nurse station on the 11th floor of Infectious Disease Centre of the Princess Margaret Hospital, the electricity supply of some of the rooms were interrupted. It is suspected that the auto swing doors between the isolation room and anteroom did not completely close and hence the negative pressure system in two of the rooms were affected. On the other hand, the auto swing doors between the anteroom and corridor did not open and the negative pressure has remained normal. On-site technicians from the EMSD were immediately informed and restored the system. The electric power and the negative pressure system resumed normal operation at 11.10 am. Ventillation system was functioning properly during the incident.

All staff in the concerned floor were asked to wear N95 respirators right after the hospital noticed the interruption of the negative pressure system. 15 patients were hospitalised on the concerned floor. Five patients

were COVID-19 confirmed cases and one of the them were in the concerned rooms. During the incident, no personnel has entered or left the rooms nor has any high risk procedure been performed. All patients and all ward staff have worn surgical masks and N95 respirators respectively. According to the hospital's assessment, the risk of infection would be extremely low.

The two hospitals are highly concerned about the incidents and have reported the cases to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System. Both hospitals have urged the EMSD to conduct an investigation to prevent similar incidents from happening again.

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## [CFS takes samples of imported salmon for testing](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (June 15) said that in view of recent media reports that the novel coronavirus was detected on chopping boards used for cutting salmon during a COVID-19 case investigation in Beijing, the CFS has taken immediate follow-up action to understand the incident. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately taken salmon samples from import and wholesale levels from different places for testing as a precautionary measure. The Centre also reminded members of the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times, and cook food thoroughly to protect food safety.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "According to current scientific information, there is no evidence indicating that human can be infected by the novel coronavirus via food (including aquatic products). In addition, the World Health Organization and global food safety assessment authorities consider that it is unlikely that the novel coronavirus can be transmitted to human via food. Nevertheless, given that raw or undercooked aquatic products are high-risk, if they are uncooked or underheated, consumption of food contaminated with bacteria or viruses may cause food poisoning. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has taken samples of imported salmon for testing as a precautionary measure."

The spokesman also reminded food handlers that they should always keep their hands clean, and frequently clean and disinfect surfaces, especially food contact surfaces in food premises (such as tableware, kitchenware, insulated bags for takeaways, conveyor belts at cashier desks) and high-touch points (such as door handlers, handles of the shopping trolleys and water taps) to ensure environmental hygiene, while social distancing measures should also be adopted. Food handlers should cease engaging in any food handling work and seek medical advice promptly when suffering or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease or symptoms of illness.

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## Second Reading debate on Employment (Amendment) Bill 2019 to resume on June 24

The Employment (Amendment) Bill 2019 (Bill) would resume its Second Reading debate at the meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on June 24, 2020.

"The Bill proposes that the maternity leave (ML) under the Employment Ordinance (EO) (Cap. 57) be increased by four weeks and be taken by the employee continuously after the 10 weeks' ML, if so entitled. The current statutory rate of maternity leave pay (MLP) (i.e. four-fifths of the employee's average daily wages) will be maintained for calculating the additional MLP in respect of the extension of ML, subject to a cap of \$36,822 (Note) per employee," a spokesman for the Government said today (June 15).

"The Bill also proposes two technical amendments which include updating the definition of 'miscarriage' under EO from 'before 28 weeks of pregnancy' to 'before 24 weeks of pregnancy' to entitle a female employee whose child is incapable of survival after being born at or after 24 weeks of pregnancy to ML if other conditions are met; and accepting a certificate of attendance issued by professionally trained persons as documentary proof for entitling an eligible employee to sickness allowance for any day on which the employee has attended a medical examination in relation to her pregnancy.

"The Government has committed that for the amount of additional MLP that is required to be paid under the Bill and has been paid by the employers, the latter may apply to the Government for full reimbursement which will be done by way of an administrative scheme."

Taking account of the views of the community and to further enhance the protection to pregnant employees, the Government has given notice to LegCo today that the Government will move an amendment to uplift the cap of the additional four weeks' MLP (i.e. \$36,822) in the Bill to \$80,000. This amount already exceeds the four weeks' MLP based on a monthly wage of \$100,000. Employees with a monthly wage of \$100,000 or below account for over 99% of female employees in Hong Kong, with reference to 2018 statistics. If the amendment is passed by LegCo, the cap of the additional MLP that employers may apply to the Government for reimbursement would correspondingly be \$80,000 per employee.

"All along, the Government has publicly pledged that its aim is to implement the reimbursement regime for the additional MLP by end-2021. In light of the expectation of the community at large to benefit pregnant employees as early as possible, we have re-visited the implementation

timetable. The Government would explore the feasibility of earlier implementation of the Amendment Ordinance and consult the Labour Advisory Board accordingly. We hope to advance the implementation of the Amendment Ordinance by one year, i.e., towards the end of this year," the spokesman added.

Note : The cap of \$36,822 is equivalent to four-fifths of the wages of an employee with a monthly wage of \$50,000 in four weeks. According to 2016 statistics, employees with a monthly wage of \$50,000 or below accounted for about 95% of female employees in Hong Kong.