

**Code of Practice  
in times of**

# ***Typhoons and Rainstorms***



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# Introduction

Hong Kong is frequented by tropical cyclones (commonly known as "typhoons") and rainstorms during the summer months. It is essential that employers and employees should take prompt and necessary action to ensure that practical and reasonable work arrangements are in place and be regularly communicated to all concerned. This would help prevent unnecessary disputes and confusion, maintain good labour-management relations, and ensure safety of employees and the smooth operation of the organisations.

Given the diversity in nature and requirements of different jobs in various trades and industries, and the need for some essential services, like public transport, public utilities and medical services etc., to maintain normal operation under inclement weather conditions, it would not be practicable to introduce legislation governing work arrangements for employees when a Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal ("Typhoon Warning Signal") or a Rainstorm Warning is in force. However, the Labour Department attaches great importance to the safety of employees in their workplaces as well as on their journey to and from work. Taking into account the interests of employers, employees and the wider community, this booklet seeks to provide practical guidelines on work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms. In preparing the work arrangements, employers should make reference to the guidelines and adopt a flexible approach.

We stand ready to provide any assistance you may need in respect of the work arrangements. Please do not hesitate to contact us, if necessary, through:



Enquiry Hotline: 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by "1823 Citizen's Easy Link")



Homepage address: <http://www.labour.gov.hk>



Offices of the Labour Relations Division (please see Appendix 4 for their address)

(This pamphlet has also been uploaded to the Labour Department's Homepage.)

# Key points of work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms

## What employers should do?

- ◆ Take prime consideration of employees' safety in the workplace and during the journey to and from work.
- ◆ Observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Employment Ordinance.
- ◆ Consult and involve employees in working out prior work arrangements and contingency measures.
- ◆ Make realistic and critical assessment of the essential staff requirements and require only the absolutely essential staff to report for duty when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.
- ◆ State clearly the time of issuance and cancellation of the Typhoon Warning Signal or Rainstorm Warnings at which employees are not required to report for duty or have to resume work.
- ◆ Provide employees with adequate facilities and equipment such as safety helmets and raincoats to ensure their safety at work.
- ◆ If at all possible, provide transport services for employees who are required to report for duty when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force. Otherwise, a special travelling allowance may be an option.
- ◆ Be flexible in handling cases of employees failing to report for duty or resume work due to genuine difficulties.
- ◆ Do not deduct wages of employees who are absent from or late for work due to adverse weather conditions or other uncontrollable factors.
- ◆ Set down clear guidelines on payment of wages and allowances under different situations, and consider giving typhoon or rainstorm allowances to employees who have worked in times of typhoons and rainstorms as an encouragement to them.
- ◆ Release employees from work **in stages** as soon as practicable after the Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued as weather conditions will deteriorate.

## What employees should do?

- ◆ Provided that public transport services are available, you are usually required to work when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 3 or below is issued or when Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning is in force.
- ◆ If you are required to be on duty under prior work arrangements, report for duty on time as far as possible. In case of genuine difficulties, notify your supervisors as soon as practicable.
- ◆ Unless there are prior work arrangements to the contrary, you are normally expected to resume work after Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or Black Rainstorm Warning has been cancelled.
- ◆ Co-operate with your employer and follow the safety rules and work procedures.

# 1 Work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms

## General aspects

In Hong Kong, typhoons and rainstorms normally occur during the summer months. In times of typhoons, the Hong Kong Observatory issues Typhoon Warning Signals according to the level of threat. It also issues an early alert ("Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement") once the Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 is expected within two hours to allow employers sufficient time to release their employees in stages according to the work requirements so as to ensure safety and ease traffic congestion. The Rainstorm Warning System aims to alert the public of the occurrence of heavy rain which is likely to bring about major disruptions, and to ensure a state of readiness within the essential services to deal with emergencies.

Inclement weather conditions can cause serious damage to life and personal property. They may also lead to major floods and landslips, causing severe traffic disruption and resulting in difficulties for employees to report for duty or arrive at work on time.

To maintain good labour relations and to avoid unnecessary disputes, **employers are strongly advised to work out, in consultation with employees wherever possible, prior work arrangements and contingency measures during typhoons and rainstorms.** The employer should state clearly the requirements before the employment commences or if it is not practicable, give sufficient notice. They should ensure that all employees are advised of such work arrangements through circulation of notice or staff handbook.

Employers should not under-estimate the danger of typhoons and rainstorms. In drawing up the work arrangements, employers should adopt a flexible approach and give prime consideration to employees' safety both in the workplace and during their journeys to and from work. Employers should also take due note of their statutory liabilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance and the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Please see Chapters Seven and Eight).

If prior work arrangements are not yet in place, employers should make reference to this code of practice and involve their employees in laying down suitable work arrangements as soon as possible.

# 2 Rules regarding report for duty

## Matters to be included in work arrangements

Depending on the job nature and operational requirements of individual employers, work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms should the following aspects:

1. Rules regarding report for duty.
2. Rules regarding release from work.
3. Rules regarding resumption of work.
4. Calculation of wages.

A sample of work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms is provided at [Appendix 1](#). A sample of work arrangements for employees working outdoors in exposed areas is at [Appendix 2](#). [Appendix 3](#) provides information on weather warnings.

The work arrangements should state clearly:

- ◆ those essential staff who are required to report for duty in times of adverse weather conditions;
- ◆ the Typhoon Warning Signal Number or the Rainstorm Warning under which non-essential employees are not required to work; and
- ◆ the time of issuance when employees are not required to report for duty.

## Essential staff

In deciding whether or not employees should report for duty, **employers should make realistic and critical assessment of the requirements of essential staff, and request only the absolutely essential staff to report for duty under adverse weather conditions.**

## In times of typhoons

Provided that public transport services are available, employees are usually required to work when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 3 or below is issued.

**When Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement, Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued, for safety reasons, employers should not require their employees to report for work unless prior agreement to the contrary has been made.**

When Typhoon Warning Signal No. 9 or No. 10 is in force, to ensure safety, employers should not require their employees to report for duty unless their services are absolutely essential.

## In times of rainstorms

Provided that public transport services are available, employees are usually required to work when Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning is in force. However, for those employees who are required to work outdoors, they should take shelter temporarily and resume work when weather conditions so permit.

**When Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, roads may be seriously flooded and weather conditions are inclement. For safety grounds, employers should not require their employees to report for work, unless prior agreement on work arrangements has been made.**

## **Due consideration of genuine difficulties**

Employers should give due consideration to the traffic conditions. They should also be flexible in handling cases involving employees who have genuine difficulties in reporting for duty or arriving at work on time. For example, employees living on outlying islands may be unable to return to work due to transport difficulties. Likewise, heavy rain may concentrate on certain areas, making employees living in these areas unable to return to work.

## **Time of issuance and requirement for reporting duty**

Employers should state clearly the time of issuance or cancellation of the different categories of Typhoon Warning Signals or Rainstorm Warnings under which the employees are not required to report for duty. For example, the employer may spell out that when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 is cancelled less than a specified number of hours before the end of working hours, the employees are not required to report for duty.

## **Employees' obligations**

When an employee who is required to return to work under prior work arrangements is unable to report for duty, he should inform his supervisors immediately. All employees should be provided in advance with the telephone numbers of their supervisors for urgent contacts.

## **Transport arrangements**

It is possible that public transport will be suspended some time after Typhoon Signal Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued. If possible, employers should provide shuttle transport services to employees. Alternatively, as encouragement, employers may give a special travelling allowance to employees who are required to report for duty under such circumstances. Where employers provide company bus service, they should give the employees clear information about the frequency, times and places of the pick-up service as well as the telephone number of the supervisor or officer-in-charge of the pick-up service for urgent contacts.

## **Other considerations**

Employers should provide employees with adequate facilities and equipment such as protective clothing to ensure safety at work in adverse weather conditions. For the employees' well being, employers should also provide food and water at the workplace so that such provisions are readily available during severely adverse weather conditions.

# 3 Rules regarding release from work

If weather conditions deteriorate and public transport services will be suspended shortly, employers should seriously consider releasing all employees, other than essential staff, from work as soon as practicable.

## In times of typhoons approaching during office hours

### Staggered release of employees

After the Hong Kong Observatory issues the Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement, employers should give due consideration to the needs of individual employees and release non-essential employees from work in stages according to the work requirements.

To ensure the safety of employees, employees who have mobility problems (for example, pregnant or physically handicapped employees) should be allowed to leave first. Employees reliant on ferry services to travel to and from their workplace should also be given priority to leave as ferry services may be affected under adverse weather conditions. Moreover, employees who face greater hardship in commuting (for example, those living in remote areas) should also leave earlier.

As for other employees, employers should arrange their release in stages, according to their travelling distances and time required to return home. This helps safeguard employees' safety and ease traffic congestion.

To ensure that the staggered release of employees is in an orderly manner, employers should work out the release arrangements in advance with their employees, bring these arrangements to the attention of the employees, and regularly review the arrangements. In applying the arrangements, employers should be flexible and take account of the actual situations such as traffic conditions and special needs of individual employees.

### Work arrangements of essential staff

Industries and establishments which have to provide normal services in times of typhoons may designate essential staff to remain on duty when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above is in force. Supervisors should ensure that essential staff are required to work only if it is absolutely necessary. The essential staff concerned should be notified beforehand.

If weather condition is so adverse or public transport is not available making it unsafe for essential staff to leave their workplace after work, supervisors should ensure that a suitable area in the workplace remains open as shelter for the staff.

## In times of rainstorms during office hours

### Under Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning

If Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning is issued during office hours, employees working indoors should remain on duty as usual and stay where they are unless it is dangerous to do so. Employers may exercise their discretion to release the employees based on their personal circumstances, the weather and road traffic conditions, etc.

Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should suspend outdoor duties as soon as practicable. They should arrange their employees to take shelter temporarily and resume duty when weather conditions so permit.

### Under Black Rainstorm Warning

If Black Rainstorm Warning is issued during working hours, employees working indoors should remain on duty as usual and stay where they are unless it is dangerous to do so. Employees working outdoors in exposed areas should stop work and take shelter immediately. Employers should not require them to resume duty until the warning is lowered and weather conditions permit.

If Black Rainstorm Warning remains in force at the end of working hours, for safety reasons, employers should provide employees with an area in the workplace as temporary shelter for them to stay if they want to.

# 4 Rules regarding resumption of work

## Conditions of resumption of work

The work arrangements should specify the conditions and the time at which employees should or should not resume work after Typhoon Warning Signals or Rainstorm Warnings are cancelled during working hours. For example, employers should spell out clearly that employees should resume duty within a specified number of hours after Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or Black Rainstorm Warning is cancelled.

## Employees' obligations

Unless there are prior work arrangements to the contrary, employees are normally expected to resume work after Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or Black Rainstorm Warning is cancelled. Employees who have difficulties in resuming duty or in reporting for duty on time should inform their employers immediately.

## Due consideration of genuine difficulties

Due to practical difficulties, an employee may be unable to report for duty after Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or Black Rainstorm Warning is cancelled. It is also possible that heavy rain, road floods or landslides may occur only in the district where the employee lives, not in the district of the workplace. Likewise, ferry services may not be resumed after Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 is cancelled. Therefore, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly based on the circumstances of each case.

# 5 Payment of wages and allowances

## Calculation of wages

Employers should set down clear guidelines on payment of wages and allowances under different situations. These guidelines should cover:

- ◆ the conditions under which full wages will be granted to employees who are not required to work during typhoons and rainstorms;
- ◆ the method of wage calculation in the cases of employees who are required to work but failed to turn up or are late for work;
- ◆ the way of reckoning the period of absence; and
- ◆ the circumstances under which other allowances are payable and their method of calculation.

## Typhoon and rainstorm allowance

Employers should consider giving typhoon or rainstorm allowances to employees who have worked in times of typhoons and rainstorms.

## Wage deductions

As typhoons and rainstorms are natural calamities, even if there are no prior work arrangements, employers should not deduct the wages of employees who have not returned to work because of adverse weather conditions or other factors beyond their control. Likewise, their entitlement to good attendance bonus should not be affected.

For employees who are required to be on duty under prior work arrangement but are absent from or late for work, employers should not deduct their wages as a matter of course. Employers should enquire into the reasons behind and give due consideration to any special circumstances of the case.

## Shift payments

For operations or posts running on shift schemes, an employee may be requested, subject to his consent, to continue working after his normal shift in case staff on the next shift cannot report for duty on time due to inclement weather. However, such an arrangement must not be compulsory. Employers should also clearly explain the method of wage calculation, arrange typhoon or rainstorm allowances as far as possible and consider the adequacy of rest breaks for such staff.

# 6 Provisions under the Employment Ordinance

## Leave, holiday and rest day

It is unlawful for an employer to reduce his employee's entitlements to annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from the issuance of Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above, or announcement of Black Rainstorm Warning.

## Dismissal

An employer should not take disciplinary action or dismiss his employee solely because the employee has not reported for duty or has arrived at work late under adverse weather conditions. The employer should give due consideration to the circumstances of the case and ascertain from the employee his reasons for absence before making any decision.

Failure to report for duty or arriving late due to genuine difficulties in adverse weather conditions does not constitute a ground for summary dismissal (i.e. dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice). Summary dismissal is a serious disciplinary action under the Employment Ordinance. It normally applies to cases where an employee has committed very serious misconduct or other acts as laid down in the Ordinance or fails to improve himself after the employer's repeated warnings.

# 7 Provisions under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance

## Employers' duties

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, employers have an obligation to maintain a safe workplace for their employees.

Where employers require their employees to work in times of typhoons or rainstorms, they should ensure that the risks at work are properly controlled and reduced to as low as reasonably practicable. Their duties include the provision and maintenance of safe plant and system of work. For example, employees should be instructed to keep themselves away from dangerous places as much as possible and be provided with suitable personal protective equipment such as safety helmets, raincoats and waterproof safety boots. At the workplace where there is a risk of persons falling from height, employees should be provided with suitable safety measures, such as proper working platforms or, if this is not practicable, suitable fall arresting systems, such as safety nets, safety harness and independent lifeline or other secure point for anchoring the safety harness.

## Employees' obligation

Employees should co-operate with their employers or other persons so far as may be necessary and follow the safety rules, instructions and work procedures.

## Enquiries

Employers and employees may refer to "A Brief Guide to the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance" published by the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department if they wish to know more about the stipulations of the Ordinance. This guide is also available on the Labour Department's Homepage: <http://www.labour.gov.hk>.

# 8 Provisions under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance

An accident to an employee shall be deemed to arise out of and in the course of employment if it happens to the employee when he is travelling from his place of residence to his place of work by a direct route within a period of four hours before the time of commencement of his working hours for that day, or from his place of work to his place of residence within a period of four hours after the time of cessation of his working hours for that day, when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force. Under these circumstances, **the employer is liable to pay compensation to the employee.**

Take an employee whose working hours ended at 5:30 p.m. as an example. He met with an accident and sustained an injury at 7:00 p.m. when he was travelling back home from his workplace. Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 was in force at the time of the accident. In the circumstances, his employer will be liable to pay him compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance.

## Enquiries

If employers and employees wish to know more about the provisions of the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, they may refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance" published by the Employees' Compensation Division of the Labour Department. This guide is also available on the Labour Department's Homepage: <http://www.labour.gov.hk>.

(Sample - For Reference Only)  
**Work Arrangements in times of  
Typhoons and Rainstorms**

**(1) General Points to Note**

- ◆ The following essential staff are required to report for work or remain on duty when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal ("Typhoon Warning Signal") No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force:

Category of Staff (Fill in the name of concerned staff if necessary)

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- ◆ Essential staff shall be provided with the telephone numbers of their supervisors for contact in case they have difficulties in reporting for duty.
- ◆ Shuttle bus service will be arranged for essential staff who are required to work when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force. Supervisors should work out the pick-up schedule specifying the time, place and frequency of the bus service.
- ◆ Supervisors should ensure that the concerned staff are aware of the arrangements and are provided with the telephone number of the officer-in-charge of the shuttle bus service.

**(2) Typhoon Warning Signal Nos. 1 and 3**

- ◆ All offices, departments and workstations are open as usual and all employees should report for duty as scheduled.
- ◆ Employees who have difficulties in reporting for duty should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable.

**(3) Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement**

- ◆ When Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued *before* normal working hours, non-essential staff are not required to report for duty. If essential staff have difficulties in reporting for duty, they should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable.
- ◆ If Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued during working hours, staff who may face greater hardships in travelling (including pregnant and physically handicapped employees and those who rely on ferry services to and from their workplace or live in remote areas) will leave as soon as practicable. Other employees will be released later in stages according to their travelling distances or the time required to return home.
- ◆ Supervisors should work out the release arrangements in advance, inform the concerned employees, and regularly review the arrangements. In applying the arrangements, supervisors should be flexible and take account of the actual situations such as traffic conditions and special needs of individual employees.

#### (4) In times of Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above, or Amber, Red or Black Rainstorm Warning

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning	Black Rainstorm Warning	Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above
(a) The warning/signal is in force before normal working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees should report for duty as usual.</li> <li>◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> <li>◆ Supervisors of employees working outdoors should arrange for them to stand by at the shelter of the workstation. They should start work only when weather conditions so permit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff are required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff are required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>
(b) The warning/signal is issued during working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees working indoors should continue their work.</li> <li>◆ Supervisors may exercise their discretion to release the staff based on their personal circumstances.</li> <li>◆ Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should promptly arrange the employees to stop work and take shelter temporarily.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees working indoors should continue their work unless it is dangerous to do so.</li> <li>◆ Supervisors may exercise their discretion to release the staff based on their personal circumstances.</li> <li>◆ Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should arrange the employees to stop work and take shelter immediately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees other than essential staff should be released.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should continue to work until released by their supervisors.</li> <li>◆ If weather conditions are so adverse that it is unsafe for essential staff to leave the workplace after work, supervisors should allow them to stay in the workplace until weather conditions improve.</li> </ul>
(c) The warning/ signal is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled 3 hours or more before the end of working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees working indoors should continue their work.</li> <li>◆ Employees working outdoors in exposed areas who have taken shelter should resume duty as soon as possible after the warning is cancelled and the weather conditions permit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees are required to return to work within 2 hours after cancellation of the warning.</li> <li>◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees have to return for work within 2 hours after cancellation of the Typhoon Warning Signal.</li> <li>◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning
(d) The warning/ signal is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled less than 3 hours before the end of working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees working indoors should continue their work.</li> <li>◆ Employees working outdoors in exposed areas who have taken shelter should resume duty as soon as possible after the warning is cancelled and weather conditions permit.</li> </ul>
(e) The warning/ signal is still in force by the end of working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees should be released as usual.</li> </ul>

	Black Rainstorm Warning	Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should continue working till the end of their schedule.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should continue working till the end of their schedule.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees should stay in a safe place until the heavy rain has passed.</li> <li>◆ An area in the company premises should be made available as temporary shelter for employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Essential staff can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers if it is unsafe for them to leave after their normal working hours.</li> </ul>

## (5) Transport Arrangements

- ◆ When Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, essential staff can take shuttle bus according to the pick-up schedule.
- ◆ The concerned staff should contact the officer-in-charge of the shuttle bus service if they are in doubt or if they have difficulties in taking the shuttle bus.
- ◆ If no shuttle bus is provided, essential staff should make use of the appropriate public transport service. When public transport is not available, the staff may take a taxi.

## (6) Calculation of Wages

- ◆ No wages, allowances and attendance bonus will be deducted if employees are released from work or are not required to report for duty in accordance with section (4) above.
- ◆ In cases where essential staff fail to report for duty or where staff failed to resume work in accordance with the work arrangements after the Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning is cancelled, supervisors should ascertain the reasons for the absence. No wage deduction will be made if the employees can provide justifications acceptable to the company.
- ◆ If the employee cannot provide justifications acceptable to the company, wage deduction is to be made. The amount deducted shall be proportionate to the period of absence.
- ◆ In cases where employees fail to report for work in accordance with section (4)(c), the period of absence shall count from the time when the employee would be reasonably expected to arrive at the workplace to resume work.

## (7) Typhoon/ Rainstorm Allowance

- ◆ Essential staff who are required to work when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force are eligible for a Typhoon/Rainstorm Allowance of HK\$\_\_\_\_\_ per hour.

## (8) Travelling Allowance

- ◆ If no company transport is provided, a travelling allowance of HK\$\_\_\_\_\_ per trip or the actual cost of transport, whichever is the greater, will be granted to employees who are required to report for duty when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

(Sample - For Reference Only)

## Work Arrangements for Outdoor Work in Exposed Areas in times of Inclement Weather Conditions, Typhoons and Rainstorms (e.g. construction workers, shipboard cargo handling workers and outdoor cleaning workers)

- ◆ Employers should make sure that the concerned staff are aware of the work arrangements. Their staff should be provided with the telephone number of the officer-in-charge of the shuttle transport service.
- ◆ Supervisors should, when work resumes, ask competent persons to carry out the requisite safety inspections to outdoor installations, such as scaffoldings, temporary supports, cranes, suspended working platforms, power supply plant, etc. before they are put into use.
- ◆ Employers should provide a temporary shelter for employees in case it is unsafe to leave the workplace because of the weather.

### (1) General Points to Note

- ◆ The following essential staff are required to report for work or remain on duty in times of inclement weather conditions, typhoons or rainstorms:

Category of Staff (Fill in the name of concerned staff if necessary)

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- ◆ Employers should adopt contingency measures to provide safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets, waterproof safety boots, raincoats etc., for the safety of essential staff who remain on duty. For instance, engineering staff on construction sites should ensure that all scaffoldings, hoardings, etc., are secured and taut and all canvas removed. Workers engaging in lifting or transport operations should avoid operating cranes such as tower cranes etc. in strong wind and should place the jibs in an appropriate and safe position according to the manufacturer's manual. Workers engaging in external maintenance and cleaning of buildings should discontinue their work, lower suspended working platforms to the ground and secure them.
- ◆ Essential staff shall be provided with the telephone numbers of their supervisors for contact in case they have difficulties in reporting for duty.
- ◆ Employers who provide their employees with shuttle transport services to and from remote workplaces, including outlying islands, should specify clearly with their employees the frequency of services, time and place of pick-up.

## (2) In Times of Inclement Weather

### Warnings for Inclement Weather Conditions

#### (a) The warning is in force before normal working hours:

- ◆ Employees should report for duty as usual.
- ◆ Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets. Employees should make use of the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided by their employers and pay special attention to the safety of the working environment.
- ◆ If the safety of employees is endangered, supervisors should arrange for them to stand by in a safe place.
- ◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in returning to work.

#### (b) The warning is issued during working hours:

- ◆ Supervisors should, having considered the actual circumstances, arrange employees to suspend their work, take temporary shelter in a safe place and resume duty when weather conditions so permit.

For example:

- If the safety of employees is endangered, supervisors in charge of shipboard cargo handling should stop the work and arrange their staff to take temporary shelter in a safe place as soon as possible.
- When the Strong Monsoon Signal or Landslip Warning is issued, the operation of cranes, suspended working platforms, slope works etc., should be suspended.

### including Thunderstorm Warning, Landslip Warning, Announcement on Flooding, Strong Monsoon Signal

- ◆ In the case of Thunderstorm Warnings, and where employees are liable to lightning strikes, their supervisors should arrange the employees to stop work as far as practicable and take shelter in safe places immediately.

#### (c) The warning is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled 3 hours or more before the end of working hours:

- ◆ All employees should resume work.

#### (d) The warning is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled less than 3 hours before the end of working hours:

- ◆ All employees should resume work.

#### (e) The warning is still in force by the end of working hours:

- ◆ Employees should be released as usual. If it is unsafe for them to leave, they can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers.

### (3) In Times of Rainstorm Warning

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning	Black Rainstorm Warning
(a) The warning is in force before normal working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees should report for duty as usual.</li> <li>◆ Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets. Employees should make use of the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided by their employers and pay special attention to the safety of the working environment.</li> <li>◆ If the safety of the employees is endangered, supervisors should arrange them to stand by in a safe place.</li> <li>◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in returning to work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets. Employees should make use of the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided by their employers and pay special attention to the safety of the working environment.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>
(b) The warning is issued during working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supervisors should promptly arrange employees to suspend their work, take temporary shelter in a safe place and resume duty when weather conditions so permit.</li> </ul> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Suspend the operation of suspended working platforms and slope works.</li> <li>■ Suspend shipboard cargo handling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed area should arrange them to stop work and take shelter immediately.</li> </ul>

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning
(c) The warning is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled 3 hours or more before the end of working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees should resume work.</li> </ul>
(d) The warning is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled less than 3 hours before the end of working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees should resume work.</li> </ul>
(e) The warning is still in force by the end of working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees should be released as usual. If it is unsafe for them to leave, they can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers.</li> </ul>

Black Rainstorm Warning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees are required to return to work within 2 hours after cancellation of the warning.</li> <li>◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty, such as travelling problems caused by road flood, landslide, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees should stay in a safe place. If they choose to stay in the company, they can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers.</li> </ul>

## (4) In Times of Typhoon Warning Signal

Typhoon Warning Signal No. 1 or No. 3	
a) The signal is in force before normal working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Employees should report for duty as usual.</li> <li>◆ Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets. Employees should make use of the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided by their employers and pay special attention to the safety of the working environment.</li> <li>◆ If the safety of the employees who have arrived at the workplace is endangered, supervisors should arrange them to stand by in a safe place. Employers should also stop operating cranes, suspended working platforms, etc.</li> <li>◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>
(b) The signal is issued during working hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Supervisors should, having considered the actual circumstances, arrange employees to suspend their work, take temporary shelter in a safe place and resume duty when weather conditions so permit.</li> </ul> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Suspend the operation of cranes and suspended working platform etc.</li> <li>■ When Typhoon Warning Signal No. 3 is in force, shipboard cargo handling employees should stop work. Their employers should arrange boats to take them ashore.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is normally issued once the Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 is expected within two hours. When the Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued during working hours, staff who may face greater hardships in travelling (including pregnant and physically handicapped employees and those who rely on ferry services to and from their workplace or live in remote areas) will leave as soon as practicable. Other employees will be released later in stages according to their travelling distances and time required to return home.

Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ When Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement or Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued, all employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.</li> <li>◆ Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets. Employees should make use of the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided by their employers and pay special attention to the safety of the working environment.</li> <li>◆ Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ When Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement or Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued, all employees other than essential staff should be released in stages as soon as practicable<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>◆ If employees choose to stay in the company, they can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers.</li> </ul>	

Supervisors should work out the release arrangements in advance, inform the concerned employees, and regularly review the arrangements. In applying the arrangements, supervisors should be flexible and take account of the actual situations such as traffic conditions and special needs of individual employees.

### Typhoon Warning Signal No. 1 or No. 3

(c) The signal is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled 3 hours or more before the end of working hours

- ◆ All employees should resume work.

(d) The signal is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled less than 3 hours before the end of working hours

- ◆ All employees should resume work.

(e) The signal is still in force by the end of working hours

- ◆ Employees should be released as usual. If it is unsafe for them to leave, they can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers.

### Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above

- ◆ All employees are required to return to work within 2 hours after cancellation of the warning.
- ◆ Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty, such as travelling problems caused by road flood, landslide, etc.

- ◆ All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.

- ◆ Essential staff can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers if it is unsafe for them to leave after their normal working hours.

## (5) Transport Arrangements

- ◆ When Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, essential staff can use the shuttle transport services provided by their employers. Shuttle transport services are available for picking up employees to and from work at specified places.
- ◆ The concerned staff should contact the officer-in-charge of the shuttle transport services if they are in doubt or if they have difficulties in taking the shuttle bus.
- ◆ If no shuttle bus is provided, essential staff should make use of the appropriate public transport service. When public transport is not available, the staff may take a taxi.

## (6) Calculation of Wages

(NOTE:)

- ◆ Employers should spell out the conditions under which employees are entitled to wages. For example, some establishments have made the following arrangements with their employees: if Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued or the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force before 1 p.m., daily-rated employees who have reported for duty are entitled to half of the daily wages; if the signal is issued or the warning is in force after 1 p.m., they are entitled to daily wages in full. Employers should also state explicitly whether employees who have already reported for duty are entitled to wages during the period of work suspension due to adverse weather condition and who subsequently resume work.
- ◆ Employers may refer to the agreements regarding payment of wages and allowances reached between employers' associations and employees' organisations in some industries.

For example:

- According to the agreement entered between the Hong Kong Bar-Bending Contractors Association and the Hong Kong Construction Industry Bar-Bending Workers Union, with effect from November 2006, employers will pay the

following amounts to casual workers who have arrived at a construction site but cannot perform any work due to rainstorms or other reasons: HK\$100 for workers working on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon and the New Territories; and HK\$150 for workers working on outlying islands not accessible by land transport.

- According to the agreement concluded among the Goods Loading, Unloading and Transportation Workers Union, the Cargo Supervisors Association and the Hong Kong Stevedore Employers' Association in June 1988, if Typhoon Warning Signal No. 3 is issued at or before 4:00 a.m., the duties of daily-rated cargo handling workers will be automatically cancelled and no wages will be paid on that day; if Typhoon Warning Signal No. 3 is issued after 4:00 a.m., employers are required to pay daily wages in full.

## (7) Typhoon / Rainstorm Allowances

- ◆ Essential staff who are required to work when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force are eligible for an allowance of HK\$\_\_\_\_\_per hour.

## (8) Travelling Allowance

- ◆ If no company transport is provided, a travelling allowance of HK\$\_\_\_\_\_ per trip or the actual cost of transport, whichever is the greater, will be granted to employees who are required to report for duty when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

# Weather Warnings

## 1. Tropical Cyclone Warning

Signal No.	Meaning
1	A tropical cyclone is centered within about 800 kilometers (km) of Hong Kong and may affect the territory.
3	Strong wind is expected or blowing generally in Hong Kong near sea level, with a sustained speed of 41- 62 kilometers per hour (km/h), and gusts which may exceed 110 km/h, and the wind condition is expected to persist.
8	Gale or storm force wind is expected or blowing generally in Hong Kong near sea level, with a sustained wind speed of 63-117 km/h from the quarter indicated and gusts which may exceed 180 km/h, and the wind condition is expected to persist.
9	Gale or storm force wind is increasing or expected to increase significantly in strength.
10	Hurricane force wind is expected or blowing with sustained speed reaching upwards from 118 km/h and gusts that may exceed 220 km/h.

When the No. 1 signal is issued, the existence of the tropical cyclone should be taken into account in planning activities. Strong winds may occur over offshore waters.

When the No. 3 signal is issued, all loose objects, particularly on balconies and roof tops, hoardings, scaffoldings and temporary structures, should be secured. Winds are normally expected to become generally strong in Hong Kong within 12 hours after this signal is issued. Winds over offshore waters and on high ground may reach gale force.

When the No. 8 signal is issued, all precautions should be completed before gales commence. Winds are normally expected to reach gale force generally in Hong Kong within 12 hours after No. 8 signal replaces No. 3 signal.

When the No. 9 or No. 10 signal is issued, all precautions should be completed. Stay indoors and away from exposed windows and doors to avoid flying debris.

## 2. Rainstorm Warning System

There are three levels of rainstorm warning: Amber, Red and Black.

Amber Rainstorm Warning	Heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall generally over Hong Kong, exceeding 30 millimetres in an hour. There will be flooding in some low-lying and poorly drained areas. Members of the public are advised to pay attention to weather changes as these might lead to situations of Red or Black Rainstorm Warning.
Red Rainstorm Warning	Heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall generally over Hong Kong, exceeding 50 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue. There are likely to be serious road flooding and traffic congestion, people who have to travel should carefully consider weather and road conditions, and avoid easily flooded areas.
Black Rainstorm Warning	Very heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall generally over Hong Kong, exceeding 70 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue. It means that there are likely to be serious road flooding and traffic congestion. People should stay indoors or take shelter in a safe place until the heavy rain has passed.

The rainfall criteria for the issuance of rainstorm warning signals are for guidance only. When prolonged rain occurs, the signals may be issued even if these rainfall criteria are not reached for individual hours.

In case heavy rain develops suddenly, a Red Rainstorm Warning may be issued without being preceded by an Amber Rainstorm Warning. Also, a Black Rainstorm Warning may not be preceded by a Red Rainstorm Warning.

## 3. Thunderstorm Warning

The issue of Thunderstorm Warning means that the likelihood of thunderstorm may affect any part of Hong Kong in a short notice (within one to several hours). They are issued irrespective of whether thunderstorms are widespread or isolated. When the warning is issued, the public should stay indoors. Employees working outdoors in exposed areas or on the water should take shelter in a safe place.

## 4. Landslip Warning

A Landslip Warning will be issued by the Hong Kong Observatory in consultation with the Geotechnical Engineering Office when there is a high risk of many landslips as a result of persistent heavy rainfall. The warning is aimed at predicting the occurrence of numerous landslips, and isolated landslips which cannot be predicted will occur from time to time in response to less severe rainfall when the warning is not in force. The warning is intended to alert engineers, contractors or others who are likely to suffer losses from landslips.

## 5. Announcement on Flooding

A Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories will be issued by the Hong Kong Observatory whenever heavy rain affects the area and flooding is expected to occur or is occurring in the low-lying plains of the northern New Territories. The Announcement draws attention to potential flooding in the northern New Territories due to heavy rain. It is intended to prompt the public to take precautionary measures against flooding and to alert engineers, contractors and others who are likely to suffer losses from flooding.

## 6. Strong Monsoon Signal

The Strong Monsoon Signal is issued when winds associated with the summer or winter monsoon are blowing in excess of or are expected to exceed 40 kilometres per hour near sea level anywhere in Hong Kong. In very exposed places, monsoon winds may exceed 70 kilometres per hour. Local topography or the presence of buildings nearby sometimes modifies the airflow substantially, making it exceptionally gusty in very localized areas. Engineers, architects and contractors should ensure that all scaffoldings, hoardings and temporary structures are secured.

### Enquiries

If employers and employees wish to have more information on weather warnings, please visit the homepage of the Hong Kong Observatory. address is <http://www.weather.gov.hk>.

## Enquiries



Enquiry Hotline: 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by "1823 Citizen's Easy Link")



Homepage Address: <http://www.labour.gov.hk>



Enquiry in person to Offices of the Labour Relations Division of the Labour Department:

### Hong Kong

#### Hong Kong East Office

34/F, Revenue Tower,  
5 Gloucester Road,  
Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

#### Hong Kong West Office

3/F, Western Magistracy Building,  
2A Pokfulam Road,  
Hong Kong.

### Kowloon

#### Kowloon East Office

Room 1206, 12/F, Stelux House,  
698 Prince Edward Road East,  
San Po Kong, Kowloon.

#### Kowloon West Office

Room 1009, 10/F,  
Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices,  
303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon.

#### Kowloon South Office

2/F, Mongkok Government Offices,  
30 Luen Wan Street,  
Mongkok, Kowloon.

#### Kwun Tong Office

6/F, Kowloon East Government Offices,  
12 Lei Yue Mun Road,  
Kwun Tong, Kowloon.

### New Territories

#### Tsuen Wan Office

5/F, Tsuen Wan Government Offices,  
38 Sai Lau Kok Road,  
Tsuen Wan, New Territories.

#### Kwai Chung Office

6/F, Kwai Hing Government Offices,  
166 - 174 Hing Fong Road,  
Kwai Chung, New Territories.

#### Tuen Mun Office

Room 2720, 27/F,  
Tuen Mun Parklane Square,  
2 Tuen Hi Road,  
Tuen Mun, New Territories.

#### Sha Tin & Tai Po Office

Rooms 304-313, 3/F,  
Sha Tin Government Offices,  
1 Sheung Wo Che Road,  
Sha Tin, New Territories.