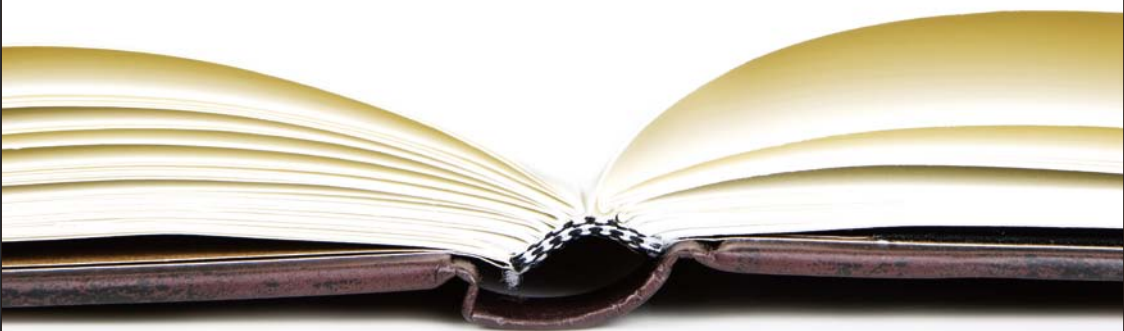




**Code of Practice**  
in times of  
**Typhoons and Rainstorms**



**Labour Department**

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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. 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, medical services, hotels and security 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. We also concern about the possible inconvenience and difficulties brought to the public and certain industries if some services are suspended. Taking into account the extensive interests of employers, employees and the community, this booklet seeks to provide advice and practical guidelines on work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms. Although this booklet is not part of legislation, employers are advised to make reference to the guidelines and adopt a flexible approach in preparing suitable work arrangements.

We stand ready to provide any assistance you may need in respect of the work arrangements. If necessary, please contact us through:



Enquiry Hotline: 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by the “1823”)



Labour Department’s Homepage: <http://www.labour.gov.hk>



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

(This booklet 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, the Employment Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.
- Consult and involve employees in working out prior work arrangements and contingency measures.
- Make realistic and critical assessment of staff requirements and only require those staff who are absolutely essential 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 and pay particular attention to their safety. If such arrangement is not feasible, a special travelling allowance should be considered.
- Be flexible in handling cases of employees failing to report for duty or resume work on time 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 factors beyond their control.

- Set down clear guidelines on calculation of working hours, payment of wages and allowances under different situations. Consider giving typhoon or rainstorm allowances as an encouragement to employees who have worked in times of typhoons and rainstorms.
- 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?**

- As a general practice, provided that public transport services are available, employees 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.
- Report for duty on time in accordance with the prior work arrangement. In case of genuine difficulties, notify the supervisors as soon as practicable.
- 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 has been cancelled.
- Co-operate with the 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 normally issues an early alert (“Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement”) once the Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 is expected to be issued within two hours to allow employers sufficient time to release their employees in stages according to the operational requirements of individual industry/organisation so as to ensure the safety of employees 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 in turn difficulties for employees to report for duty or arrive at work on time.

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

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.

## **Matters to be included in work arrangements**

Depending on the job nature and operational requirements of individual employer, work arrangements in times of typhoons and rainstorms should cover rules regarding:

1. report for duty;
2. release from work;
3. resumption of work; and
4. calculation of working hours and wages.

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

# 2

## Rules regarding report for duty

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/cancellation of warning 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 staff requirements, and only request those staff who are absolutely essential to report for duty under adverse weather conditions.**

### In times of typhoons

As a general practice, 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 or 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 reasons, 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 and 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 problems. Likewise, heavy rain may be concentrated in certain areas, making employees living in these areas unable to return to work.

## **Time of issuance/cancellation 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, employers may spell out that when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 is cancelled in 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 contact means and telephone numbers of their supervisors for urgent contacts.

## **Transport arrangements**

It is possible that public transport will be suspended some time after Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above is issued. If possible, employers should provide shuttle transport services to employees who are still required to work. 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 responsible persons 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. As employees may not be able to go out under such weather conditions, employers should also provide food and drinking water at the workplace for employees' consumption where appropriate.

# 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. Irrespective of the kinds of typhoon, rainstorm or other weather warning being in force, employers should always guard against any potential dangers at the workplace brought about by weather changes, especially for those employees engaged in outdoor work.

### In times of typhoons approaching during working 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, those with mobility problems (for example, pregnant or physically handicapped employees) should be allowed to leave first. Given that certain transport services are prone to be affected by adverse weather conditions, employees who rely on such transport services for commuting to and from work should also be given priority to leave. Moreover, employees who may 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 them to the attention of the employees, and have them reviewed regularly. 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. For example, employees who work in remote areas, such as outlying islands, may have to take ferries

and make transfers and so take longer time to return home. To facilitate these employees in arriving home under safe traffic conditions and before suspension of public transport service, employers should allow them to leave as early as practicable.

## **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 working hours**

### **Under Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning**

If Amber or Red 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. 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. With all these arrangements in place, employers should always take into account the prevailing circumstances faced by individual employees, such as whether the transport service in the place of residence of the employees has been resumed in the material time, and the relevant traffic and road conditions affecting the employees, etc.

### 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 landslips may occur only in the district where the employee lives, not in the district of the workplace. Likewise, the transport service which the employee relies on to travel to workplace, such as ferry services, may not be resumed immediately 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 and arrangement of working hours and wages

Employers should set down clear guidelines on the calculation of working hours, wages and allowances under different situations. These guidelines should cover:

- payment arrangement for employees who are not required to work during typhoons and rainstorms;
- how working hours and wages will be calculated when employees who are required to work fail to turn up or are late for work;
- how absence period will be reckoned;
- the circumstances under which other allowances are payable and their methods of calculation; and
- whether the period of work stoppage is counted as working hours and its payment arrangement for employees who have to stop work during normal working hours due to inclement weather.

### 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 explain clearly the method of wage calculation, arrange typhoon or rainstorm allowances as far as possible and consider the adequacy of rest breaks for such staff. Meanwhile, employers should provide food and drinking water to those who have to continue working there.

# 6

## Provisions under the Employment Ordinance

### **Annual leave, statutory holidays and rest days**

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 penalise 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.

Employers should avoid assigning workers to work in times of typhoons or rainstorms wherever possible. Where employers require their employees to work in times of typhoons or rainstorms, they should assess the associated risks to 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 the employee compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance.**

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>.

# Work Arrangements in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms

(Sample – For Reference Only)

## (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)

- 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 responsible persons of the shuttle bus service.

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

- All offices, departments and work units 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, physically handicapped employees and those who rely on ferry services to return home or live in remote areas) will be given priority to leave.
- 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**

**(a) The warning/signal is in force before normal working hours**

- All employees should report for duty as usual.
- Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.
- 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.

**(b) The warning/signal is issued during working hours**

- Employees working indoors should continue their work.
- Supervisors may exercise their discretion to release the staff based on their personal circumstances.
- Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should promptly arrange the employees to stop work and take shelter temporarily.

**(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**

- Employees working indoors should continue their work.
- 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.

**Black Rainstorm Warning**

- All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.
- Essential staff are required to report for duty.
- Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.

**Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above**

- All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.
- Essential staff are required to report for duty.
- Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.

- Employees working indoors should continue their work unless it is dangerous to do so.
- Supervisors may exercise their discretion to release the staff based on their personal circumstances.
- Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should arrange the employees to stop work and take shelter immediately.

- All employees other than essential staff should be released.
- Essential staff should continue to work until released by their supervisors.
- 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.

- 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.

- All employees have to return for work within 2 hours after cancellation of the Typhoon Warning Signal.
- Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.

**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**

- Employees working indoors should continue their work.
- 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.

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

- Employees should be released as usual.

**Black Rainstorm Warning**

- Employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.
- Essential staff should continue working till the end of their schedule.

- Employees should stay in a safe place until the heavy rain has passed.
- An area in the company premises should be made available as temporary shelter for employees.

**Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above**

- All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.
- Essential staff should continue working till the end of their schedule.

- 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 take shuttle bus according to the pick-up schedule.
- The concerned staff should contact the responsible persons 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 and Arrangement 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 the table at section (4).
- In cases where essential staff fail to report for duty or where staff fail 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, in addition to wages, are eligible for a Typhoon/Rainstorm Allowance of HK\$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% of normal wages.

## (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.

# Work Arrangements for Work Outdoor and in Exposed Areas in times of Inclement Weather Conditions, Typhoons and Rainstorms

(e.g. construction workers, shipboard cargo handling workers and outdoor cleaning workers)

(Sample – For Reference Only)

## (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)

- Employers should adopt appropriate contingency measures as well as 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 the pick-up vehicles and boats. Particular attention should be paid to the safe operation of these transport services.

- 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 responsible persons 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.

## (2) In Time of Inclement Weather

### Warnings for Inclement Weather Conditions

(including Thunderstorm Warning, Landslip Warning, Announcement on Flooding, Strong Monsoon Signal)

#### (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 by the inclement weather, 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 by the condition of the sea, supervisors in charge of shipboard cargo handling should stop the cargo handling work on ships 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.
- 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.

## Warnings for Inclement Weather Conditions

(including Thunderstorm Warning, Landslip Warning, Announcement on Flooding, Strong Monsoon Signal)

**(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 Time of Rainstorm Warning

#### Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning

(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 the employees is endangered by the inclement weather, supervisors should arrange 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 promptly arrange employees to suspend their work, take temporary shelter in a safe place and resume duty when weather conditions so permit.

For example:

- > Suspend the operation of suspended working platforms and slope works.
- > Suspend the operation of shipboard lifting appliances and cargo handling.

### Black Rainstorm Warning

- All employees other than essential staff are not required to report for duty.
  - 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.
  - Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.
- 
- Supervisors of employees working outdoors and in exposed area should arrange them to stop work and take shelter immediately.



**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**

- 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.

### Black Rainstorm Warning

- 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.
- 
- 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.

## (4) In Time of Typhoon Warning Signal

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

#### a) The signal 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 the employees who have arrived at the workplace is endangered by the inclement weather, supervisors should arrange them to stand by in a safe place. Employers should also stop operating cranes, suspended working platforms, etc.
- Employees should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.

#### (b) The signal 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:
  - > Suspend the operation of cranes and suspended working platform etc.
  - > 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.

<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, physically handicapped employees and those who rely on ferry services to return home or live in remote areas) will be allowed to leave first as soon as practicable. Other employees will be released later in stages according to their travelling distances or time required to return home.

### Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above

- 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.
- 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.
- Essential staff should inform their supervisors as soon as practicable if they have difficulties in reporting for duty.

- 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>.
- If employees choose to stay in the company, they can take temporary shelter in an area provided by their employers.

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 responsible persons 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 and Arrangement of Wages

- 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.

## (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, in addition to wages, are eligible for an allowance of HK\$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% of normal wages.

## (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.

## 1. Tropical Cyclone Warning

Signal No.	Meaning
1	A tropical cyclone is centered within about 800 kilometres (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 kilometres 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 those on balconies and rooftops, 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, and is likely to continue. There will be flooding in some low-lying and poorly drained areas. Heavy rain may bring about flash floods. People should stay away from watercourses. 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 take necessary precautions. Heavy rain will bring flash floods. Flooding is expected to occur or is occurring in watercourses. People should stay away from watercourses.

### 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. It will also bring flash floods. Flooding is expected to occur or is occurring in watercourses. People should stay away from watercourses, 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

Thunderstorm Warnings are intended to give short-term (within one to a few hours) notice of the likelihood of thunderstorms affecting any part of Hong Kong. Thunderstorm Warnings are issued irrespective of whether thunderstorms are widespread or isolated. When thunderstorms are widespread, it will be mentioned in the Thunderstorm Warning that thunderstorms will generally affect Hong Kong without specific reference to individual regions. For isolated thunderstorms, the warning will indicate the regions that will be affected during the effective warning period. If thunderstorms are expected to persist or there are changes in their impact or coverage, the warning will be respectively extended or updated. Stay indoors when the warning is in force. Employees working outdoors should take shelter in safe places where possible.

### 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 to take precautionary measures.

### 5. Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories

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. Heavy rain may bring about flash floods. People should stay away from watercourses.

### 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 localised 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. The address is <http://www.weather.gov.hk>.



Enquiry Hotline: 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by “1823”)



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



Enquiry in person to Offices of the Labour Relations Division:  
<http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/tele/lr1.htm>



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