

Code of Practice in Times of Adverse Weather and “Extreme Conditions”

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Labour Department



Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Foreword	2
Chapter 2	Formulate work arrangements in advance	4
Chapter 3	Safety comes first	24
Chapter 4	Comply with laws and rules	32
Appendix 1	Reference guidelines on general work arrangements	38
Appendix 2	Reference guidelines on work arrangements for working outdoors and in exposed areas	50
Appendix 3	Weather warnings relevant to this guideline	62
Appendix 4	Enquiries	69

Chapter 1

Foreword

In times of adverse weather¹ (such as tropical cyclones and rainstorms) and “extreme conditions”², the operation of various trades and industries in Hong Kong may be affected. **The Labour Department has formulated the “Code of Practice in Times of Adverse Weather and ‘Extreme Conditions’” (CoP)** to assist employers and employees in drawing up practical work arrangements in advance, including those pertaining to report for duty, release from work, resumption of work, and wages, etc. The CoP provides practical guidelines and examples for reference to avoid unnecessary disputes between employers and employees, as well as to ensure smooth business operations.



¹ The adverse weather mentioned in CoP generally refers to weather conditions related to weather warnings listed in **Appendix 3**, including Tropical Cyclone Warning, Rainstorm Warning, Thunderstorm Warning, Landslip Warning, Special Landslip Advisory, Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories, Localised Heavy Rain Advisory and Strong Monsoon Signal. For details, please refer to **Appendix 3**.

² In the case where a Super Typhoon or other natural disasters of a substantial scale seriously affects the working public to resume work or bring safety concern for a prolonged period, such as large-scale power outage, extensive fallen windows from high-rises leading to dangerous streetscape, major landslides, extensive flooding, widespread serious obstruction of public transport services, etc., if situation warrants, the Government will decide whether it is necessary to make a territory-wide “extreme conditions” announcement.

Formulate work arrangements under adverse weather and “extreme conditions”- Key principles

Employers and employees should formulate practicable work arrangements taking into account factors such as the business nature, operations and job requirements of the company, with reference to the following **three major principles** :

- 1 Formulate work arrangements in advance (see Chapter 2)**
- 2 Give prime consideration to the safety of employees (see Chapter 3)**
- 3 Must comply with requirements of labour legislation (see Chapter 4)**



Formulate work arrangements in advance to ensure smooth operations and harmonious labour relations

Chapter 2

Formulate work arrangements in advance

I Formulation and announcement of work arrangements

Employers should conduct an **early assessment** of which employees are required to report for duty at workplaces when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 (T8) or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions” are in force (referred to as “designated staff”); whilst other staff need not report for duty at workplaces (referred to as “general staff”).

In assessing the need for “designated staff”, employers should take into account the business nature, operational needs and urgency of service of their organisations, having due regard to the safety of employees, manpower requirements, staffing establishment and circumstances of individual employees, so as to **keep the number of staff required to report for duty at workplaces to the minimum**.

Employers should also make clear at an early stage the arrangements for the payment of wages and related allowances to “general staff” and “designated staff” in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions” (for details, please refer to (e) Arrangements in respect of wages and allowances and (f) Arrangements in respect of “designated staff” below).

Employers should ensure that all employees are informed of and agree to the relevant work arrangements in advance. In the event of unforeseen circumstances or special needs, where “general staff” are required at short notice to report for duty at their workplaces during adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, the relevant work arrangements should be the same as those for “designated staff”.



Corporate Example - Let employees know their work arrangements in advance

A pharmaceutical manufacturing company



In addition to the staff handbook setting out the work arrangements during adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, the company will also issue notices to staff to remind them of the relevant arrangements.

An information technology company



The company has formulated clear guidelines regarding work arrangements under adverse weather, which have been made known to all employees. As the company adopts a hybrid work model, staff working from home can also review relevant information on the company's intranet at any time.

Responsibilities of employers



- ✓ Employers should explain to employees, prior to the commencement of their employment contract, the arrangements regarding work and wage payment during adverse weather and “extreme conditions”. If this is not possible, they should notify employees of these arrangements as soon as practicable.
- ✓ The relevant work arrangements should be set out in the staff handbook, displayed at the workplaces, or circulated on a regular basis, etc.
- ✓ A list or categories of “designated staff” required to be on duty at the workplaces should be drawn up as early as possible, taking into account the operational needs and manpower situation of the organisation, and the number of staff should be kept to a minimum wherever possible.
- ✓ Effective measures should be taken to ensure that all employees are made aware and reminded of the relevant arrangements before the start of the season of typhoon and rainstorm so as to avoid unnecessary disputes.



Important reminder :

Every employee should have a clear understanding of his / her work and wage payment arrangements as agreed with the employer prior to adverse weather and “extreme conditions”.

Given the diversity in nature and requirements of different jobs in various trades and industries, and the different districts where employees commute to and from work as well as resume work, employers **should not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to work arrangements**. Employers should fully communicate with employees, be considerate to employees' circumstances, and address the actual situations in an empathetic and flexible manner. For example:



Employees who are pregnant or with disabilities or living in areas with limited public transport services may experience inconvenience or difficulties in commuting to their workplaces.

The actual situations of employees commuting to and from work and resuming work (e.g. weather conditions, traffic conditions, etc.).



Corporate Example - Handling in a considerate, empathetic and flexible manner

A hotel group

HOTEL



In times of adverse weather, a transportation allowance will be provided to support staff in commuting safely. If the condition is too hazardous for employees to travel to work, or if public transportation is not accessible, they may consult their head of department for alternative arrangements.

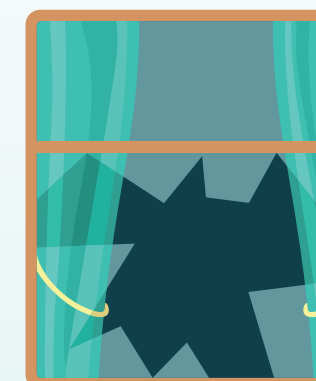
A fashion retail company



Prior to the issuance of T8, pregnant employees and those with mobility difficulties may leave the workplace earlier. Once the signal has been cancelled, should employees be unable to arrive at the office within the specified time frame, the company will exercise flexibility regarding attendance, taking into account traffic conditions and other factors.



Heavy rain may be confined to the areas where employees live, preventing them from returning to their workplaces smoothly.



Employees facing other practical needs and difficulties (such as urgent handling of damage to their homes caused by adverse weather).

II Work arrangements - Specific areas

Specific work arrangements in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions” generally cover the following areas:

- a Arrangements in respect of report for duty
- b Arrangements in respect of early release from work
- c Arrangements in respect of work resumption
- d Arrangements in respect of remote work (if applicable)
- e Arrangements in respect of wages and allowances
- f Arrangements in respect of “designated staff”
- g Regular review of work arrangements



Important reminder :

Employers must comply with the provisions on wages and leave under the Employment Ordinance, and must not diminish the statutory rights of employees. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with relevant provisions under the Employment Ordinance is **liable to prosecution.**

(See (e) below and Chapter 4 “Comply with laws and rules”)

a Arrangements in respect of report for duty

Employers should work out in advance with their employees the arrangements of reporting for duty in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, including specifying in advance which employees need to report for duty at workplaces, etc.



Corporate Example - Specifying “designated staff” in advance

A public transport service provider



To ensure that normal transport services can be restored to the public as quickly as possible following adverse weather conditions, the company has established a mechanism whereby department heads specify in advance which frontline staff are essential personnel who must return to their workplaces and remain on standby.



Arrangements in respect of early release from work

Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement or T8

- ▶ Employers should give due consideration to individual needs of employees (such as place of work and residential area) to work out in advance the **order of priority for releasing employees from workplaces or from work** when Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement³ or T8 is issued, and notify the employees concerned.

Rainstorm warning

- ▶ The situations under rainstorm warnings and tropical cyclone warnings vary. Rainstorm warning signals may be issued or changed within a relatively short period of time, which normally pose less impact than tropical cyclone warnings on employees working indoors or at sheltered locations. Therefore, it may not necessarily be safer to release these employees from workplaces when the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force.
- ▶ Apart from rainstorm warnings, attention should also be paid to the Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories and the Localised Heavy Rain Advisory, as road conditions may still be hazardous when these are in force.



Corporate Example - Arrangements in respect of early release from work

A food manufacturing company



Pregnant employees and those with mobility difficulties may leave their workplaces before the Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued.

A pharmaceutical manufacturing company



The company usually arranges for shuttle buses to take staff to MTR stations before the Observatory issues a Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement in order for them to get home as quickly as possible.

³ The Hong Kong Observatory (the Observatory) will make a Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement when T8 is expected within two hours.



Arrangements in respect of work resumption

Employers and employees should discuss and agree in advance on the arrangements for resuming work after T8 or higher, Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is cancelled, or when “extreme conditions” ended, subject to safety and traffic conditions. Such arrangements may include the time of work resumption (time frame within which employees should resume duty after the relevant warning signal is cancelled) and report for duty by batches and arrangements in respect of remote work (if applicable).

Even if arrangements for resuming work have been drawn up in advance, after the above warning signals are cancelled or “extreme conditions” ended, employees may experience delays on their way to work due to large number of people commuting to work at the same time as well as the aftermath of adverse weather (e.g. road blockage, disruption to public transport services, flooding, or landslides, etc.). Employers should therefore be considerate, empathetic and flexible, with due regard to the actual situations of individual employees and always give prime consideration to the safety of employees.

If the transport services provided by employers are affected and there are no other viable public transport options available, employers should give priority to the safety of employees and should not require them to return to the workplaces immediately.

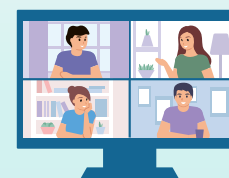
Examples of flexible arrangements in respect of work resumption are as follows:



- ▶ **Resuming work by batches** or adjusting the duty roster arrangement based on employees' places of residence;



- ▶ If the above warning signals or “extreme conditions” are cancelled or ended during working hours, employees should return to work within 2 hours as far as possible. If the above warning signals or “extreme conditions” are cancelled or ended close to the normal end of the working day, employers should **exempt employees from having to resume work**;



- ▶ Permit **remote work** for employees who have difficulties in returning to their workplaces or **allow more time for them to report for duty and resume work**.



Corporate Example - Flexible arrangement of work resumption

A department store and a fashion chain



If T8 is cancelled, employees are generally required to report for duty at the workplaces within two hours. If employees are unable to arrive at the workplaces within the specified time frame, they may report to the manager for notifying the Human Resources Department accordingly. The company will exercise flexibility taking into account the traffic conditions and other factors.

A pharmaceutical manufacturing company



If T8, Black Rainstorm Warning Signal are cancelled or “extreme conditions” ends after 1 pm, all staff are exempted from resuming work and full wages will be paid for the resulting period of absence.

A food manufacturing company



If T8 is cancelled within 5 hours before the end of working hours, employees are generally required to resume work at the workplaces within 2 hours. If employees are unable to report for duty within the specified time frame, they may provide proof to their supervisor, in which case they will be paid their full wages for the resulting period of absence.

The abovementioned general work arrangements in respect of “general staff” on: (a) Report for duty; (b) Release from work; (c) Resumption of work (please refer to p. 9-11), are briefly summarised as follows. For details, please refer to **Appendix 1** (for arrangements concerning “designated staff”, see paragraph (f) below):

	T8 or higher	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions”
I Issued / in force before working hours	Employers should not require employees to return to the workplaces.	
II Issued ⁴ / in force within working hours	Employees should be released from workplaces or from work by batches in accordance with prior arrangements.	Indoor work should generally continue as usual unless the workplaces are in danger. - However, employers should immediately suspend employees’ work in outdoor and exposed areas and arrange for them to take shelter in a safe place temporarily. (See Chapter 3 “Safety comes first”)
III Cancelled / ended within working hours	When safety and traffic conditions allow: Employees should resume work according to the arrangements and time frame agreed in advance with their employers.	
IV Still in force by the end of working hours	Where safety conditions allow: Employers can release employees from work or make available a suitable place as temporary shelter for those who still stay at the workplaces.	

⁴ Include Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement.

d Arrangements in respect of remote work (if applicable)

With the widespread adoption of technology, employers should assess in advance the feasibility of **allowing employees to work remotely** (such as work from home), thereby avoiding the risks and difficulties associated with commuting to and from the workplaces.

Employers should take into account the following factors when drawing up relevant personnel policies and codes of practice:

- ▶ Based on the nature of the industry, the operational needs of the establishment, and the roles and responsibilities of employees, clearly define as early as possible the scope and mode of work for employees suitable for remote work, as well as the **circumstances under which remote work arrangements should be implemented**;
- ▶ **Consult staff** and take individual employees' needs into account throughout the process, and **maintain communication** with staff during implementation;
- ▶ How employers **communicate** with employees **and supervise** their work during periods of remote work (e.g. via email, telephone and messaging apps, etc.);
- ▶ Whether employees have the **necessary equipment** to perform their duties whilst working remotely (e.g. computer hardware and required software, as well as computer anti-virus software, etc.);
- ▶ Whether the employee's work involves handling sensitive or confidential data and documents, and the relevant **handling procedures and security measures**⁵;
- ▶ **Review** the execution arrangements and facilities for implementing **remote work arrangements**;
- ▶ Ensure **compliance with the statutory obligations and relevant requirements** under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

⁵ To enhance data security and the protection of personal data privacy under remote work arrangements, please refer to the Guidance Note promulgated by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong (PCPD), namely "Protecting Personal Data under Work-from-Home Arrangements: Guidance for Organisations", "Protecting Personal Data under Work-from-Home Arrangements: Guidance for Employees" and "Protecting Personal Data under Work-from-Home Arrangements: Guidance on the Use of Video Conferencing Software".



Corporate Example - Flexibly allowing staff to work remotely

A media agency company



When T8 or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or "extreme conditions" are in force, employees are not required to return to the workplace and may work remotely from home. Once the relevant signal has been cancelled, employees are generally required to return to the office within two hours; however, if the signal is cancelled after 2 pm, employees will be flexibly arranged to work remotely from home.

An information technology company



The company operates a hybrid work model. If T8 is cancelled before 2 pm, the staff who need to return to the office on that day may choose to do so or work remotely; if T8 is cancelled after 2 pm, staff will be arranged to work remotely.

A freight logistics company



If T8 or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is cancelled before 1 pm, office staff need to return to their workplaces; however, depending on their work nature, employees may switch to working remotely.





Arrangements in respect of wages and allowances

Tropical cyclones and rainstorms are natural calamities. If employees are not required to report for duty, released from workplaces early, unable to report for duty at workplaces or resume work on time, etc. due to adverse weather, “extreme conditions” or other environmental factors beyond their control, employers should handle such situations in accordance with the following principles:

- ▶ If employers have arranged that their employees need not report for duty at workplaces, they should not deduct their wages, good attendance bonus, or allowances, nor require employees to compensate subsequently for the loss of working hours in response to the aforementioned situations.
- ▶ If employers arrange “designated staff” to work, allowances should be paid to them (for details, please refer to (f) below).

If an employee fails to report for duty or resume work on time, and cannot provide reasonable explanations accordingly, his wages may be affected. When making arrangements regarding wages and allowances, employers must adhere to the following principles:

- ▶ Where a deduction is to be made from wages, the amount deducted should be proportional to the time not worked.
- ▶ The time not worked should be calculated only after deducting a reasonable period required for him to return to his workplace.



Corporate Example - Without deducting wages of employees

A department store



All employees are exempt from reporting for work when T8 or higher is in force. When relevant signal is cancelled, staff are generally required to report for duty within two hours. Employees will be paid their full wages for days of absence due to adverse weather conditions, as well as for any failure to arrive at the workplace within the specified time due to transport difficulties.

An employer cannot reduce employees’ entitlements to annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days under the Employment Ordinance to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from the issuance of adverse weather warnings or the “extreme conditions” announcement. The Employment Ordinance contains clear provisions regarding the granting of annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days by employers. **Employers must strictly comply with these provisions when granting such leave.**



Important reminder :

Even if an employer knows in advance that a tropical cyclone may soon affect Hong Kong⁶, they should not make last-minute changes to employees’ leave arrangements in order to offset the loss of working hours resulting from the issuance of T8 or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal and other severe weather warnings, or the “extreme conditions” announcement.

⁶ There are uncertainties in weather changes. The time of issuance and the duration of adverse weather warnings depend on the latest weather development.



Arrangements in respect of “designated staff”

If employers require some employees to report for duty at workplaces under adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, attention should be paid to the following in respect of their work arrangements.

(i) Report for duty, transportation and other arrangements

1. Duty arrangements and contingency measures

- ▶ “Designated staff” should report for duty at workplaces, continue their work at workplaces, and be released from work in accordance with the work arrangements previously agreed with employers.
- ▶ If they encounter difficulties in returning to the workplaces, they should notify their employer as soon as possible. Supervisors should also provide “designated staff” with their contact numbers so they can be reached if “designated staff” cannot report for duty.

2. Transportation arrangements

- ▶ Employers should arrange transport services for “designated staff” who need to travel to and from their workplaces.
- ▶ Supervisors should draw up transport arrangements, including times, locations and frequencies.
- ▶ “Designated staff” may use the available transport services in accordance with the timetable.
- ▶ Supervisors should ensure that “designated staff” are aware of the transport arrangements made and provide them with the contact number of the person responsible for the transport service. Should staff have any queries regarding the transport service or encounter difficulties preventing them from using the transport, they should contact the person responsible for the transport service.
- ▶ If no transport service is provided, “designated staff” may use suitable public transport. If no suitable public transport is available, employers should arrange for them to travel by taxi and cover the related expenses.



3. Workplace safety

- ▶ If employers need to arrange for “designated staff” to report duty at the workplaces, they should give prime consideration to the safety of “designated staff” at the workplaces.
- ▶ If there are potential safety risks at the workplaces due to adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, employers should arrange for “designated staff” to return to a safe place. (See Chapter 3 “Safety comes first”)

4. Meal arrangements

- ▶ “Designated staff” on duty at workplaces may not be able to go out for a meal under adverse weather and “extreme conditions”. Employers should provide food and drinking water at the workplaces for employees as necessary.

5. Arrangements of rest place

- ▶ If “designated staff” are unable to leave after the end of their shift due to weather conditions, disruption to public transport services or other exceptional circumstances, employers should arrange a suitable and safe place for them to rest at the workplaces.



Corporate Example - Arrangement of safe resting places for employees

A hotel group



HOTEL When T8 or higher, or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force, the company will provide additional meals for employees required to remain on duty at the hotel, and will arrange guest room accommodation for employees in need until weather conditions improve.

(ii) Duty allowance

Employers should **grant an extra duty allowance** to “designated staff” who are on duty at workplaces when T8 or higher, Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions” are in force.

Example

In addition to their normal wage, during the period in which the above warning and the “extreme conditions” are in force, employees returning to their workplaces to perform their duties shall be entitled to an allowance of HK\$_____ or _____% of their normal wage per hour.

- ▶ If staff on the next shift are unable to report for duty at workplaces due to genuine difficulties, and an employer would like the employee of the preceding shift to continue to work due to operational requirements of the establishment, the employer should ensure that the employee does so voluntarily and that his physical condition permits it, and should arrange appropriate rest breaks for him.
- ▶ For employees who voluntarily continue to assist, the employer should pay them **an allowance more favourable than their normal wages** to compensate for their additional service.

Example

For the extended working hours, employees are entitled to an allowance of HK\$_____ per hour or _____% of their normal wage.



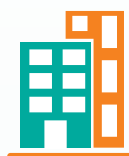
Corporate Example - Granting extra allowance to staff on duty

A restaurant group



Restaurant staff on duty when T8 or “extreme conditions” are in force will be granted an additional fixed hourly-based typhoon allowance.

A property management company



When T8 or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions” are in force, staff on duty are granted an additional allowance equivalent to 0.5 to 1.5 times their basic salary, depending on their rank.

A public transport service provider



When T8 or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions” are in force, staff on duty at the workplaces are granted overtime allowance doubling the usual rate.

(iii) Travelling allowance

If employees are required to report for duty when T8 or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions” are in force without provision of transport service by the employer, the employer should **grant them an additional travelling allowance**.

Example

HK\$ _____ or the actual travel expenses, whichever is higher.



Corporate Example - Granting travelling allowance to staff on duty

A public transport service provider



Employees may claim travel expenses for journeys to their workplaces during adverse weather. If public transport services are suspended, they may claim reimbursement of the taxi costs.

A property management company



In times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, regardless of whether employees need to use public transport to get to work or walk to work, and whether public transport services are operating as normal; employees are entitled to a fixed amount of travelling allowance or reimbursement for the expense of travelling by taxi to their workplaces.

(iv) Temporary redeployment of “general staff”

If “general staff” are temporarily required to report duty at the workplaces under adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, due to special operational requirements of the organisation, the relevant work arrangements (such as report for duty, release from work, wages and allowances, etc.) for them should be in line with those for “designated staff”.



Regular review of work arrangements

Based on the operational experience regarding work arrangements in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, employers should maintain communication with employees, review the relevant work arrangements from time to time, and make appropriate updates or amendments, such as:

Example

- ▶ the priority order for releasing employees;
- ▶ arrangements for employees’ resumption of work;
- ▶ arrangements of remote work (if applicable);
- ▶ the list of “designated staff” required to return to the workplace to be on duty in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, along with their work arrangements, safety measures and transport services, etc.

See **Appendix 1** for the reference guidelines on general work arrangements.

Chapter 3

Safety comes first

I Employers' obligations

a Workplace safety

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, employers / proprietors have an obligation to ensure the safety and health at work of all their employees, including the provision and maintenance of a working environment for employees that is, so far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.



General work safety guidelines

Employers shall ensure the safety of employees working under the adverse weather or “extreme conditions”, and that the associated **risks at work** have been properly controlled and **reduced** as far as reasonably practicable. Employers should also **keep the number of staff required to report for duty at workplaces to the minimum** as far as possible. In any case, **employees' safety should be the prime consideration**.

b Safety on the way to and from workplaces

According to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, the employer is liable to pay compensation if there is an accident to an employee resulting in injury or death when he is travelling by a direct route from his place of residence to his place of work, or from his place of work back to his place of residence after work, within a period of four hours before or after his working hours for that day, when T8 or higher, a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or “extreme conditions” are in force.

II Ensuring the safety of employees at work

Employers should discuss with and notify staff who are required to report for duty at workplaces under adverse weather and “extreme conditions” in advance about the duty arrangements and contingency measures. Specific details include the following:

- ▶ If no safe public transport services are available to and from the workplace for the employees, employers must give serious consideration to **providing safe transport** for them. If the transport services provided by the employers are affected and there are no other viable public transport options available, the employers should give prime consideration to the safety of employees and **should not require them to report for duty immediately**.
- ▶ Employers must **conduct risk assessment** of workplaces, take suitable precautionary measures and **provide a safe shelter or structure** to protect employees from the effects of strong wind, thunderstorms and rainstorms.
- ▶ If there is a risk of employees falling from height while at work, the employer shall first **provide suitable safety facilities** for the employees, such as suitable working platforms. Where this is not practicable, the employer shall **provide suitable fall arresting systems**, such as safety nets, full body safety harnesses and independent lifelines or other secured anchorage points for anchoring the full body safety harnesses.
- ▶ If **workplaces pose potential safety risks** due to adverse weather or “extreme conditions”, employers should arrange for employees to take shelter in a safe place and **formulate safety plans and emergency contingency plans**. For example, they should provide employees with emergency evacuation route, safe shelters, first aid equipment, food, drinking water and support. They should also **disseminate weather and safety information** to employees who are working outdoors or in remote areas.

- ▶ Employers must pay attention to the latest weather information⁷ issued by the Observatory and be prepared for **immediate evacuation of employees** from the workplaces where safety is affected.
- ▶ Employers shall **develop a safe system of work**⁸ in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions” and **provide** employees with **the necessary work equipment** such as communication system and suitable personal protective equipment (such as safety helmets with chin straps, raincoats and waterproof safety boots, etc.), and **provide** them with **necessary information, instruction, training and supervision**.
- ▶ Employers must also **develop training plans** to educate employees about the risks associated with adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, as well as the relevant safety measures.
- ▶ If employees on duty at the workplace are unable to leave after their shift ends due to weather conditions, disruption to public transport services or other exceptional circumstances, employers should **arrange a suitable and safe place for them to rest at the workplace**.

⁷ Weather information, include weather warnings, special weather tips, weather forecast, etc.

⁸ A safe system of work is a suitable safe working procedure which results from systematic examination of a task in order to identify all the hazards. It formulates effective and reasonably practicable safe methods to ensure that hazards are eliminated or risks are minimised. The five steps to a safe system of work are: (i) Assessing the task; (ii) Identifying the hazards; (iii) Formulating safe methods; (iv) Implementing the system; and (v) Monitoring the system.

III

Safety considerations for work resumption arrangements

Even after adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, employers should take into account the following safety considerations when making arrangements for employees to resume work:

a

Safety on the way to resume work at workplaces

Assess the safety of employees travelling to their workplaces; if roads or public transport services in certain districts have not yet resumed immediately, allow employees not to resume work temporarily or arrange remote work for them (if applicable).

b

Workplace safety after adverse weather and “extreme conditions”

- ▶ Employers should assess the impact of adverse weather and “extreme conditions” on the workplaces and **prohibit the entry of any persons** other than the relevant maintenance personnel **into the areas that are still dangerous**.
- ▶ Where it is necessary to deploy “designated staff” to work in potentially hazardous environments, employers must **ensure** that **workplace risks have been adequately controlled**, provide appropriate safety measures and personal protective equipment (such as safety helmets with chin straps, raincoats and waterproof safety boots, etc.), and **minimise the level of workplace risks** to the extent that is reasonably practicable.



- ▶ If the workplaces are damaged and are posing potential safety risks (such as broken exterior walls or windows, etc.), employers should **immediately carry out safety inspections**, prepare and adopt appropriate safety measures before arranging for employees to return to the workplaces.
- ▶ When the adverse weather or “extreme conditions” are over, lifting appliances, scaffolds, suspended working platforms, electrical installations, confined spaces, excavation works and other plant should resume operation or be used only after **thorough examination by a competent examiner / competent person** and being certified to be in safe working order. Management personnel should also **fully advise and instruct workers to follow appropriate safety measures** when working at height or engaging in lifting operations and other hazardous work processes.

c Remain vigilant

- ▶ Pay attention to weather information and remain highly vigilant; be aware that work safety may still be affected even after the cancellation or lowering of warning signals of thunderstorms, rainstorms and tropical cyclones or ending of “extreme conditions”, **regularly review work safety guidelines for adverse weather and “extreme conditions”**.

d Employees' cooperation

- ▶ **Employees should cooperate fully with their employers and relevant personnel**, and comply with safety rules, instructions and work procedures; if they identify any hazards at the workplace, or encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty, they should immediately notify their employers so that appropriate arrangements can be made. In all circumstances, the **safety of employees and their colleagues should be given prime consideration**.



IV Working outdoors and in exposed areas: Safety guidelines

- ▶ Employers shall ensure employees' safety at work and **develop systems of work that are safe and without risks to health** for those employees who remain on duty at workplaces under adverse weather conditions and “extreme conditions”, including provision of adequate safety facilities and personal protective equipment (such as safety helmets with chin straps, raincoats and waterproof safety boots, etc.) to ensure their safety. In addition, employers and employees should adopt appropriate contingency measures. For example:

Example

- ▶ **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 wall maintenance or cleaning buildings should discontinue their work, lower the suspended working platforms to the ground and secure them.**
- ▶ **Develop training plans** to educate employees about the risks associated with adverse weather and “extreme conditions”, and relevant safety measures.
- ▶ Supervisors should, when work resumes, instruct **competent examiners / 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 suitable place as temporary shelter from wind and rain for employees** who are unable to leave their workplaces as usual because of adverse weather and “extreme conditions”.



Guidelines on arrangements for working outdoors and in exposed areas

- ▶ See [Appendix 2](#) for guidelines on arrangements for working outdoors and in exposed areas in times of adverse weather and “extreme conditions”.



Find out more

Employers and employees who wish to know more about occupational safety and health regarding working in adverse weather may refer to the “Guide on Safety at Work in times of Inclement Weather” published by the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department and the Occupational Safety and Health Council. Please scan the QR code on this page or visit the Labour Department’s website: www.labour.gov.hk.



- ▶ If the workplaces are damaged by adverse weather and extreme conditions” posing potential safety risks (such as exterior walls or broken windows, etc.), employers should **immediately carry out safety inspection**, prepare and adopt appropriate safety measures, before arranging for employees to return to the workplaces, to **accord top priority to employees’ safety** at all times.
- ▶ Supervisors should inspect all workplaces and **suspend any work that cannot be carried out safely** under adverse weather and “extreme conditions”.
- ▶ If employees are working in outdoor and exposed areas and may be endangered by adverse weather or “extreme conditions”, they must **immediately stop work and take shelter in a safe place temporarily**.
- ▶ **Provide food and drinking water for employees** at the workplaces, in case those on duty are unable to go out for a meal.
- ▶ If employees on duty at the workplace are unable to leave after their shift ends due to weather conditions, disruption to public transport services or other exceptional circumstances, the employer should **arrange a suitable and safe place for them to rest at the workplace**.
- ▶ Pay attention to the latest weather information issued by the Observatory and be prepared for **immediate evacuation of employees** from the workplaces where safety is affected.
- ▶ Employers should **regularly review work safety guidelines** with employees under adverse weather conditions and “extreme conditions”.



Transportation arrangement for remote workplaces

- ▶ In remote work locations, including outlying islands and similar areas, if employers provide employees with transport services to and from the workplace, they should clearly inform them of the timetables, pick-up times and locations of the relevant vehicles and vessels, etc.

Chapter 4 / Comply with laws and rules

I Employment Ordinance

Annual leave, statutory holidays and rest days

- ▶ An employer **cannot reduce** employees' entitlements to annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days under the Employment Ordinance as compensation for the loss of working hours resulting from the issuance of T8 or higher, the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal, other adverse weather warnings or the "extreme conditions" announcement.
- ▶ There are clear provisions in the Employment Ordinance on granting of annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days by employers. **Employers must strictly comply with the relevant provisions when granting such leave.**
- ▶ It is **unlawful** for an employer to fail, without reasonable excuse, to comply with the relevant provisions.

Situations in which employees fail to report for duty or arrive at work on time

- ▶ If an employee fails to report for duty or arrive at work on time due to adverse weather conditions or after "extreme conditions" ended, the employer should ascertain the cause of the incident and carefully consider the individual circumstances of the employee concerned. **Disciplinary action or dismissal should not be taken lightly.**
- ▶ The Employment Ordinance imposes strict restriction on wage deductions, prohibiting employers from deducting employees' wages at will. If employers make wage deduction of employees who cannot provide reasonable explanations for failing to report for duty or resume work timely, only wages for the period of absence can be deducted.
- ▶ Summary dismissal is a serious disciplinary action. It normally applies to cases where an employee has committed very serious misconduct or has failed to improve himself after the employer's repeated warnings.



i Find out more

Employers and employees who wish to know more about the provisions of the Employment Ordinance may refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employment Ordinance" published by the Labour Department. Please scan the QR code on this page or visit the Labour Department's website : www.labour.gov.hk.



Employers' obligations

- ▶ Under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, employers / proprietors have an obligation **to ensure the safety and health at work of all their employees**, including the provision and maintenance of a working environment for employees that is, so far as reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.
- ▶ Employers should, wherever possible, **avoid assigning** workers to work in times of adverse weather or "extreme conditions". Should employers require their employees to work under such weather or conditions, they should **assess the associated risks before work** to ensure that the **associated risks at work have been properly controlled and reduced** as far as reasonably practicable.

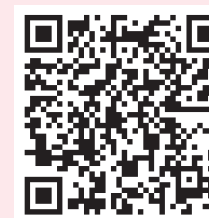
Employees' obligations

- ▶ According to the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance and the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance, an employee has duty to take care for the safety and health of the employee and of other persons, and **should cooperate with the employer and relevant personnel**, follow the safety rules, instructions and work procedures.
- ▶ If employees are required to report for duty at workplaces in times of adverse weather and "extreme conditions", they should plan their journey to and from work in advance. If employees encounter difficulties, they should discuss the matter with their supervisors. In all circumstances, **prime consideration should be given to the safety of employees and their colleagues**.



i Find out more

Employers and employees who wish to know more about the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance 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. Please scan the QR code on this page or visit the Labour Department's website: www.labour.gov.hk.



Besides, please visit the Labour Department's website for more information about the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance.

III The Employees' Compensation Ordinance

Employers' obligations

According to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, if an employee sustains an injury or dies as a result of an accident arising out of and in the course of his employment, his employer is in general liable to pay compensation under this Ordinance even if the employees might have committed acts of faults or negligence when the accident occurred.

An accident to an employee resulting in injury or death **is 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 T8 or higher, a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or "extreme conditions" are in force. Under these circumstances, **the employer is liable to pay compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance.**

Example

- ▶ An employee, whose working hours ended at 5:30 p.m., had an accident and sustained bodily injury at 7:00 p.m. when he was travelling back home from his workplace. T8 was in force at the time of the accident.
- ▶ In such circumstances, the employer will be liable to pay compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance.



i Find out more

Employers and employees who wish to know more about the provisions of the Employees' Compensation Ordinance may refer to "A Concise Guide to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance" published by the Employees' Compensation Division of the Labour Department. Please scan the QR code of this page or visit the Labour Department's website: www.labour.gov.hk.



Appendix 1

Reference guidelines on general work arrangements



“ General staff ”

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / Standby Signal No. 1 (T1) / Strong Wind Signal No. 3 (T3)	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal
(a) Issued / in force before working hours	- Employees should report for duty as usual⁹. - Employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) are required to report for duty at workplaces¹⁰.	Employers should not require employees to report for duty at workplaces¹⁰.

⁹ Employees should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).

¹⁰ Employers and employees should make prior agreement on whether other work arrangements such as remote work (if applicable) and related supporting measures are in place for employees who are unable to or need not report for duty at workplaces during working hours due to adverse weather or “extreme conditions”.



“ General staff ”

T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal).	Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or T8 or higher).



“ General staff ”

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal
(b) Issued / in force within working hours	- Employees working indoors should continue to work as usual in a safe manner¹¹. - Employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) should be released from workplaces earlier or from work in a safe manner¹².	Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3)

¹¹ Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).

¹² Employers and employees should make prior agreement on whether other work arrangements such as remote work (if applicable) and related supporting measures are in place for employees who are released from workplaces earlier during working hours due to adverse weather or “extreme conditions”.



“ General staff ”

T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
- Upon the issuance of the Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement (made when T8 is expected within two hours) or T8, employees should be released from workplaces or from work by batches in accordance with prior arrangements¹². - Employees who may have greater difficulties in travelling home (including employees who are pregnant, with disability, reliant on ferry services to get home or living in remote areas) should be given priority to be released from workplaces or from work. - Other employees should be released from workplaces or from work by batches according to their travelling distance or the time required for returning home. - Supervisors should take account of the actual situations (such as traffic conditions and special needs of individual employees, etc.) and adopt a flexible approach. - If in need, employees can choose to stay in the workplaces. A suitable area in the workplaces should be made available to them by employers as temporary shelter.	- To stay where they are or move to a safe place. Employees who have already reported for duty at workplaces can continue to work as usual in a safe manner¹¹. - If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release staff from the workplaces or from work earlier in a safe manner if feasible or make available a safe place as their temporary shelter. - Employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) should be released from workplaces earlier or from work in a safe manner¹².



“General staff”

Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3

Black Rainstorm Warning Signal

(c)

Issued / in force
**before the
commencement
of working hours**
and is cancelled
/ ended **within
working hours**

- Employees working indoors should continue to work as usual in a safe manner¹³.
- When the warning is in force, employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) are required to report for duty at workplaces¹⁴.

- When the warning is in force, employers should not require employees to report for duty at workplaces¹⁴.
- If the warning is cancelled within working hours, employees should follow prior work resumption arrangements and time frame previously agreed with their employers and resume work as appropriate¹³.
- Supervisors should take account of the actual situations (such as traffic conditions and specific needs of individual employees, etc.) and adopt a flexible approach.
- If there are potential safety risks in the workplaces, employers should notify employees not to return to workplaces for the time being and should only allow them to resume work at workplaces upon confirming it is safe to do so.

¹³ Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they have genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces or resuming work at workplaces on time (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).

¹⁴ Employers and employees should make prior agreement on whether other work arrangements such as remote work (if applicable) and related supporting measures are in place for employees who are unable or need not report for duty at workplaces during working hours due to adverse weather or “extreme conditions”.



“General staff”

T8 or higher

“Extreme conditions”

- Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal).

- Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or T8 or higher).



“ General staff ”

Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3

Black Rainstorm Warning Signal

(d)

Issued / in force
**within working
hours**, still in
force **by the end
of working hours**

- Employees should be released as usual after the end of working hours.
- A suitable area in the workplaces should be made available by employers as temporary shelter from wind and rain for employees, if required.
- Employees should stay in a safe place until the heavy rain has passed.
- A suitable area in the workplaces should be made available by employers as temporary shelter from wind and rain for employees.
- If safety conditions allow and based on the employees' needs, employers can release employees at the end of their working hours.



“ General staff ”

T8 or higher

“Extreme conditions”

- Employees should have been released from workplaces or from work by batches already as per (b) above when T8 or higher is in force (except for special circumstances).
- If safety conditions allow and based on the employees' needs, employers can release them at the end of their working hours or make available a suitable area as temporary shelter for those still at workplaces.

In times of Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 or T3, the work arrangements in respect of “designated staff” are the same as those in the above for “general staff”.

 “ Designated staff ”			
	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal	T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
(a) Issued / in force before working hours	• “Designated staff” should report for duty at workplaces or continue their work at workplaces in a safe manner in accordance with the prior arrangements. • They should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty at workplaces (such as due to road blockage, flooding, landslides or public transport services or transport services arranged by employers being affected, etc.). • If the transport services provided by the employer are affected and there are no other viable public transport options available, employers should give prime consideration to the safety of employees and should not require them to report for duty immediately. • Employers should develop a safe system of work eliminating hazards and risks to health for employees who still need to work, including provision of relevant safety equipment and personal protective equipment (such as safety helmets with chin straps, etc.). • Employees who still need to work and “designated staff” should also make use of the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided by employers and pay special attention to the safety of the working environment.		

 “ Designated staff ”			
	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal	T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
(b) Issued / in force within working hours	• “Designated staff” should continue their work at workplaces in a safe manner in accordance with the prior arrangements. If there are other prior arrangements, they may continue their work in case staff on the next shift are unable to report for duty at workplaces due to genuine difficulties. Employers should provide employees with food and drinking water at the workplaces as necessary. • They (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides). • If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release employees from the workplaces or from work earlier in a safe manner if feasible or make available a safe place as their temporary shelter. • Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) above.		



“ Designated staff ”

Black Rainstorm
Warning Signal

T8 or higher

“Extreme
conditions”

(c)

Issued / in force
**before the
commencement
of working hours**
and is cancelled /
ended **within
working hours**

- “Designated staff” should continue their work at workplaces in a safe manner in accordance with the prior arrangements. If there are other prior arrangements, they may continue their work in case staff on the next shift are unable to report for duty at workplaces due to genuine difficulties. Employers should provide them with food and drinking water at the workplaces as necessary.
- They (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, flooding, landslides, public transport services or transport services arranged by employers being affected, etc.).
- If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release staff from the workplaces or from work earlier in a safe manner if feasible or make available a safe place as their temporary shelter.
- If the transport services provided by the employer are affected and there are no other viable public transport options available, employers should give prime consideration to the safety of employees and should not require them to report for duty immediately.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) above.



“ Designated staff ”

Black Rainstorm
Warning Signal

T8 or higher

“Extreme
conditions”

(d)

Still in force **at the
end of working
hours**

- “Designated staff” should be released in a safe manner in accordance with the prior arrangements. If there are other prior arrangements, they may continue their work at workplaces in case staff on the next shift are unable to report for duty due to genuine difficulties. Employers should provide them with food and drinking water at the workplaces as necessary.
- Employers should make a suitable area in the workplaces available to “designated staff” as temporary shelter from wind and rain during or after working hours as necessary.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) above.

Appendix 2 / Reference guidelines on work arrangements for working outdoors and in exposed areas



“ General staff ”

	Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal
(a) Issued / in force before working hours	- Employees should report for duty as usual. - Employees should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty at workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides). - Employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) are required to report for duty at workplaces. - Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets with chin straps. Employees should also 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 adverse weather, supervisors should arrange employees who have arrived at workplaces to stand by in a safe place and suspend the operation of cranes, suspended working platforms, etc.	The employer should not require employees to report for duty at workplaces.



“ General staff ”

T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal).	Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or T8 or higher).



“General staff”

Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3

Black Rainstorm Warning Signal

(b)

Issued / in force
within working hours

- Supervisors should promptly arrange employees whose safety is affected to suspend their outdoor work, take temporary shelter in a safe place and resume duty only when weather conditions so permit.

For example:

When Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force:

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

When T1 or T3 is in force:

- Stop the operation of cranes, suspended working platforms, etc.
- When T3 is issued, employees handling shipboard cargo should stop work and their employers should arrange boats to take them ashore.

- Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).
- Employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) should be released from workplaces earlier or from work.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a).

- Supervisors should immediately suspend the work of employees working outdoors and in exposed areas and arrange temporary shelter in a safe place for them.

- Employees (e.g. those who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).

- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a).



“General staff”

T8 or higher

“Extreme conditions”

- Upon the issuance of the Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement (made when T8 is expected within two hours) or T8, employees should be released from workplaces or from work by batches in accordance with prior arrangements.
- Employees who may have greater difficulties in travelling home (including employees who are pregnant, with disability, reliant on ferry services to get home or living in remote areas) should be given priority to be released from workplaces or from work.
- Other employees should be released from workplaces or from work by batches according to their travelling distance or the time required for returning home.
- In implementing relevant arrangements and contingency measures, supervisors should take account of the actual situations (such as traffic conditions and special needs of individual employees, etc.) and adopt a flexible approach.
- If needed, employees can choose to stay in the workplace. Employers should make a suitable area in the workplaces available to them as temporary shelter.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) above.

- To stay where they are or in a safe place during the specified period of announcement, instead of heading for work at workplaces immediately.
- Supervisors should immediately suspend the work of employees working outdoors and in exposed areas and arrange temporary shelter in a safe place for them.
- If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release staff from the workplaces or from work earlier in a safe manner if feasible.



“General staff”

Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3

Black Rainstorm Warning Signal

(c)

Issued / in force
before the
commencement
of working hours
and is cancelled/
ended within
working hours

- Employees should continue to work as usual in a safe manner.
 - Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).
 - When the warning is in force, employers may exercise discretion to consider whether employees who have specific needs (such as pregnant or disabled employees, etc.) should be released from workplaces earlier or from work.
 - Employees working outdoors who have taken temporary shelter from wind and rain in safe places should resume duty as soon as possible after the warning is cancelled and when weather conditions permit.
 - Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b) above.
- Employers should not require employees to report for duty at workplaces when the warning is in force.
 - If the signal is cancelled within working hours and when safety and traffic conditions allow, employees should follow the prior arrangements and time frame they have previously agreed with their employers and resume work.
 - In implementing the relevant arrangements and contingency measures, supervisors should take account of the actual situations such as traffic conditions and needs of employees (including employees who are pregnant, with disability, those who rely on ferry services to return to the workplaces or live in remote areas), and adopt a flexible approach. Supervisors should also regularly review the arrangements with employees.
 - Employees should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in resuming work at workplaces on time (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides).
 - If there are potential safety risks in the workplaces, employers should notify employees not to return to workplaces for the time being and should only allow them to resume work at workplaces upon confirming it is safe to do so.
 - Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b) above.



“General staff”

T8 or higher

“Extreme conditions”

- Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal).
- Work arrangements are the same as those in the left column (Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or T8 or higher).



“ General staff ”

Amber or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal / T1 / T3

Black Rainstorm Warning Signal

(d)

Issued / in force
**within working
hours**, still in force
**at the end of
working hours**

- Employees should be released as usual after the end of working hours.
- Employers should make available to employees suitable area in the workplaces as temporary shelter from wind and rain as necessary.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b) above.
- Employees should stay in a safe place until heavy rain has passed
- Employers should make available to employees a suitable area in the workplaces as temporary shelter from wind and rain.
- If safety conditions allow, employers can release employees at the end of their working hours based on the employees' needs.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b) above.



“ General staff ”

T8 or higher

"Extreme conditions"

- Employees should have been released from workplaces or from work by batches already as per (b) above when T8 or higher is in force (except for special circumstances).
- If safety conditions allow, employers can release employees at the end of their working hours based on their individual needs or make available to employees still at workplaces a suitable area as temporary shelter.
- Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b) above.



“ Designated staff ”

	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal	T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
(a) Issued / in force before working hours	• “Designated staff” should report for duty at workplaces or continue their work at workplaces in a safe manner in accordance with prior arrangements. • They should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty at workplaces (such as due to road blockage, flooding, landslides or public transport services or transport services arranged by employers being affected, etc.). • If the transport services provided by the employer are affected and there are no other viable public transport options available, employers should give prime consideration to the safety of employees and should not require them to report for duty immediately. • Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets with chin straps, etc. • “Designated staff” on duty should also 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.		



“ Designated staff ”

	Black Rainstorm Warning Signal	T8 or higher	“Extreme conditions”
(b) Issued / in force within working hours	• “Designated staff” should continue their work at workplaces in a safe manner in accordance with prior arrangements. If there are other prior arrangements, “designated staff” may continue their work in case staff on the next shift are unable to report for duty due to genuine difficulties. • They (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty at their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, flooding, landslides, public transport services or transport services arranged by employers being affected, etc.). • If the transport services provided by the employer are affected and there are no other viable public transport options available, employers should give prime consideration to the safety of employees and should not require them to report for duty immediately. If the workplaces are in danger, employers should release staff from the workplaces or from work earlier in a safe manner if feasible or make available a safe place as their temporary shelter. • Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) above.		
(c) Issued / in force before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled / ended within working hours			
(d) Still in force at the end of working hours			

Situations under Thunderstorm Warning, Landslip Warning, Special Landslip Advisory, Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories, Localised Heavy Rain Advisory and Strong Monsoon Signal

(a) Warning is issued before working hours:	• All employees should report for duty as usual. • Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in reporting for duty at workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides). • Employers should provide employees with safety equipment and personal protective equipment, such as safety helmets with chin straps. Employees should also 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 adverse weather conditions, supervisors should arrange for them to stand by in a safe place.
(b) Warning is issued within working hours:	• Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides). • Supervisors should take account of the actual situations to arrange employees to suspend their work, take temporary shelter from wind and rain in a safe place and resume duty only if 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. • When Thunderstorm Warnings are in force, and where employees are liable to lightning strikes, their supervisors should arrange for the employees to stop work as far as practicable and take shelter in a safe place immediately.

Situations under Thunderstorm Warning, Landslip Warning, Special Landslip Advisory, Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories, Localised Heavy Rain Advisory and Strong Monsoon Signal

(c) Warning is issued before the commencement of working hours and is cancelled within working hours:	• All employees should continue to work as usual in a safe manner. • Employees (including those working on shift or who are required to work outside offices, etc.) should notify their supervisors as soon as possible if they encounter genuine difficulties in travelling to and from their workplaces (such as due to road blockage, public transport services being affected, flooding or landslides). • Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b).
(d) Warning is still in force at the end of working hours:	• Depending on weather conditions, employees should stay in a safe place. • Employers should make available a suitable area in the workplaces to employees as temporary shelter from wind and rain. • If safety conditions allow, employers can release employees at the end of their working hours based on their individual needs. • Employers and employees should adopt the work safety measures stated in (a) and (b) above.

Appendix 3

Weather warnings relevant to this guideline

Tropical Cyclone Warning

Signal No.	Meaning
1	A tropical cyclone is centred within about 800 kilometres (km) of Hong Kong and may affect the territory.
3	Strong wind is blowing or expected to blow 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 blowing or expected to blow 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 blowing or expected to blow with sustained speed reaching upwards from 118 km/h and gusts that may exceed 220 km/h.

- When T1 is issued, the existence of the tropical cyclone should be taken into account in planning activities. Strong winds may occur over offshore waters.
- When T3 is issued, secure all loose objects or take them indoors. Low-lying areas may have flooding or backflow of seawater owing to storm surge. Stay away from dangerous places. 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 T8 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 T8 replaces T3. The Observatory will make a Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement when T8 is expected within two hours.
- When Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No.9 or 10 is issued, all precautions should be completed. Beware of change in wind directions. Stay indoors and away from exposed windows and doors to avoid flying debris.

Rainstorm Warning System

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

Amber Rainstorm Warning Signal	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 Signal.
Red Rainstorm Warning Signal	Heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall generally over Hong Kong, exceeding 50 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue. Further heavy rain could cause, if not already caused, serious road flooding and traffic congestion. People who have to travel should carefully consider the weather and road conditions and take necessary precautions. Heavy rain will bring flash floods, and flooding is occurring or is expected to occur in watercourses. People should stay away from watercourses.
Black Rainstorm Warning Signal	Heavy rain has fallen or is expected to fall generally over Hong Kong, exceeding 70 millimetres in an hour, and is likely to continue. Because of seriously flooded roads and inclement weather conditions, people are advised to take shelter in a safe place and stay there. Heavy Rain will bring flash floods, and flooding is occurring or is expected to occur in watercourses. People should stay away from watercourses.

- 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 Signal may be issued without a preceding Amber Rainstorm Warning Signal.
- Also, a Black Rainstorm Warning Signal may be issued without a preceding Red Rainstorm Warning Signal.

C 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.
- For isolated thunderstorms, the warning issued by the Observatory will indicate the regions that will be affected during the warning period to alert members of the public to take appropriate precautions. If thunderstorms are expected to persist or affect other parts of the territory, the warning will be extended. When thunderstorms are widespread or the areas being affected vary, it will be mentioned in the thunderstorm warning that Hong Kong will be affected by thunderstorms without specific reference to individual regions.
- When inclement weather comes with thunderstorms, the Observatory will mention “severe squally thunderstorms” and the associated high-impact weather information in the Thunderstorm Warning with regard to the circumstances, including violent gusts, hail, waterspout, tornado.
- The development, movement and dissipation of thunderstorms can be quite rapid and fairly localized. Thunderstorm warnings supplement the forecast of thunderstorms in routine weather forecasts by drawing people’s attention to thunderstorms that are about to or have already taken place, or to warn people of thunderstorms not previously expected. The warning is intended to assist engineers, contractors or other people who are likely to be affected by thunderstorms. It also alerts relevant government departments and organizations to take appropriate actions.
- While a thunderstorm warning is in force, managers of outdoor facilities should be vigilant about changes of the state of sky and give appropriate instructions to users of the facilities.

d Landslip Warning

- A landslip warning will be issued by the Observatory in conjunction with Geotechnical Engineering Office when there is a high risk of many landslides as a result of persistent heavy rainfall. The warning is aimed at predicting the occurrence of numerous landslides, and isolated landslides which cannot be predicted will occur from time to time in response to less severe rainfall when the warning is not in force.
- On the issuance of such a warning, a Landslip Special Announcement will be sent to the local radio and television stations for broadcast to the public and the announcement will be updated at regular intervals until the likelihood of landslides has diminished.
- The landslip warning supplements routine weather forecasts by drawing attention to risk from landslides due to heavy rain. It is intended to prompt the public to take precautionary measures to reduce their exposure to risk posed by landslides, and to assist engineers, contractors and others who are likely to suffer losses from landslides. The warning also alerts the relevant government departments and organisations to take appropriate actions.
- A landslip warning is issued irrespective of whether other severe weather warnings, e.g. tropical cyclone signals or rainstorm warning signals, are in force.
- Like all forecasts, a landslip warning represents an assessment of the weather based on the latest information available at the time. There will unavoidably be false alarms as well as occasions when heavy rain which may cause landslides develop suddenly and affect parts of Hong Kong before a warning can be issued.



Special Landslip Advisory

- The Special Landslip Advisory targets situations when heavy rains persist in some areas but the risk of landslides in the majority of Hong Kong does not reach the Landslip Warning level, the Geotechnical Engineering Office and the Observatory will issue a Special Landslip Advisory to list out those areas with a higher risk of landslides, so as to alert the public to the danger of landslides in those specific areas.

Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories

- A Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories will be issued by the 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. Heavy rain may bring about flash floods. People should stay away from watercourses.
- The warning is also intended to alert engineers, contractors and others who are likely to suffer losses from flooding.

Localised Heavy Rain Advisory

- The development and movement of heavy rain that affects Hong Kong can be vastly different. Sometimes the heavy rain may be widespread, while on other occasions it may be localised and cause serious flooding only in certain districts but not others.
- The issuance of the Localised Heavy Rain Advisory is based on the recorded and forecast regional rainfall amount. If heavy rain at that time does not extend generally over Hong Kong and reach the criteria for a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal, the Observatory will issue the Localised Heavy Rain Advisory, indicating the affected districts and the respective recorded or expected rainfall, to alert the public of potential flooding due to heavy rain in the districts, so as to take precautionary measures.

- When localised heavy rain persists or there are or will be changes in the affected districts, the Observatory will update the advisory appropriately.
- If heavy rain is forecast to extend to affect widespread areas and reach the criteria of Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal, the Observatory will issue the corresponding warning signal. The advisory also reminds relevant government departments to take appropriate responsive actions, such as emergency measures to alleviate the impact of flooding in concerned districts.
- Members of the public can get the latest situation of heavy rain via radio, television and from the Observatory. Those in the districts affected by heavy rain should take appropriate measures to prevent possible loss caused by flooding.
- People should also be cautious when travelling to the concerned districts.

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.
- Operations at sea should take special care against high winds and rough sea conditions. Rough seas and swells may affect the coast.

Find out more

If employers and employees wish to have more information on weather warnings, please visit the website of the Observatory: www.weather.gov.hk.



Appendix 4 / Enquiries

This CoP and CoP At a Glance have also been uploaded to the Labour Department's website:



CoP



CoP At a Glance

Enquiry Hotline: 2717 1771 (the hotline is handled by "1823")
Website: www.labour.gov.hk



For office address of the Labour Relations Division, please refer to www.labour.gov.hk/eng/tele/lr1.htm



The background of the entire page is a solid teal color. It is decorated with numerous white raindrops of varying sizes and several white diagonal lines of varying lengths, some solid and some dotted, representing falling rain. These elements are scattered across the top two-thirds of the page.

May 2026

A white, fluffy cloud is centered horizontally in the lower third of the page. Below the cloud, there are five parallel white diagonal lines slanting downwards to the right, representing rain falling from the cloud.