



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Thursday, April 4, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Governor's message to US President	1
Statement by the Deputy to the Governor	1
Prior work arrangements in times of rainstorms important ..	2
Medical seminar on growing up	3
Campaign against mosquito breeding	4

Saturday, April 6, 1996

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
Public warned against using illegal cordless phones	6

Governor's message to US President

* * * * *

The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, has sent the following message today (Thursday) to the President of the United States:

Dear Mr President,

I was deeply saddened to hear the news of the tragic death of Secretary Ron Brown and his party in the Adriatic. I met Mr Brown on both the recent occasions he travelled to Hong Kong and China. His energy and enthusiasm, and his very warm sense of humour left a deep impression on us all. He was an outstanding member of your administration and this sad news has shocked the community here.

I send my heartfelt condolences to his wife and family and to the families of all those who died.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely
Chris Patten

End

Statement by the Deputy to the Governor

* * * * *

The following statement is issued by the Deputy to the Governor, Mrs Anson Chan:

"We are shocked and saddened to learn that the plane carrying US Commerce Secretary, Mr Ron Brown, and a number of business leaders and military personnel, has crashed near Croatia.

"Mr Brown was a good friend of Hong Kong and the region. He was a tireless trade promoter, and has inspired American business with a new focus on the big emerging markets. He was also a man of great charm, and will be missed by all who have met him.

"Our condolences go to his family and loved ones at this sad moment, as well as the families of others on the plane."

End

Prior work arrangements in times of rainstorms important

* * * * *

The Labour Department today (Thursday) advised employers and employees to reach a prior agreement on work arrangements and contingency measures in times of rainstorms.

The advice came from the acting Assistant Commissioner for Labour, Mr Yeung Chi-kin, following a recent rainstorm which had caused traffic congestions in some districts.

Mr Yeung said making such an agreement was very important in preventing unnecessary misunderstandings and labour disputes.

"Statutory regulation of work arrangements in times of rainstorms would not be practicable because of the diversity in nature and requirements of jobs in different trades and industries.

"Therefore, employers are strongly advised to adopt a flexible approach in drawing up work arrangements during inclement weather.

"Due consideration should be given to employees' safety in workplaces as well as their journeys to and from work," he said.

The Labour Department has published a bilingual booklet entitled "Code of Practice in Times of Typhoons and Rainstorms" which serves as a reference guide to facilitate employers and employees to make early work arrangements for inclement weather.

This publication is available at various Labour Relations Service branch offices throughout the territory.

An agreement on work arrangement should normally cover rules regarding report for duty, release from work, resumption of work and calculation of wages.

"The agreement should also state clearly the colour code of rainstorm under which employees are not required to work and the time of issue of such signals when they are not required to work and the time of issue of such signals when they are not required to report for duty," Mr Yeung said.

Noting that some industries may require employees to work under the Black Rainstorm Warning, Mr Yeung said such a requirement should be clearly stated before employment commences and sufficient notice should be given to employees.

"The work arrangements should also include instructions regarding the release of employees when the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force during working hours," he said.

"Employers and employees should also make prior agreements on conditions under which employees should return to work when rainstorm warnings are lowered during working hours."

However, employers are urged to adopt a flexible approach towards resumption of duty as some employees may have difficulties in returning to work.

"As rainstorms are a natural phenomenon, due consideration should also be given to employees who are absent from or late for work so that their earnings, including attendance bonus, are not adversely affected," Mr Yeung said.

He said the existing Employees' Compensation Ordinance provided compensation to workers who were injured while travelling between their place of residence and their place of work after the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning had been issued.

Employers or employees who require assistance are welcome to approach the nearest Labour Relations Service branch office.

End

Medical seminar on growing up

* * * * *

Secondary students, parents and teachers are invited to attend a medical seminar on Sunday (April 7) on common problems that children may face during growing up stage.

The seminar, "I have a date with doctors - the growing hearts", is jointly organised by the Education Department and the Hong Kong Medical Association.

An identical seminar was held at Hong Kong Science Museum last month and the response was good.

Medical practitioners will give short talks on common concerns of students, parents and teachers - self-destructive tendency and sex education. They will also answer questions from the audience.

The seminar will be held at the theatre, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, 345 Queen's Road Central from 3 pm to 5 pm.

A small number of tickets will be available at the venue on that day for the public on a first-come-first-served basis.

End

Campaign against mosquito breeding

* * * * *

With the approach of the summer season, the Health Education Unit of the Department of Health will launch a campaign in April against mosquito breeding.

During the month, the unit's 24-hour hotline 2723 0013 will carry a two-minute message in Cantonese on mosquito prevention.

"After listening to the taped message, callers may leave their questions with the answering machine and staff of the unit will call back," a spokesman for the department said today (Thursday).

Entitled "Remove stagnant water to eliminate mosquito breeding", the campaign is sponsored by the Urban and Regional councils.

It aims at reminding building contractors and households to take preventive measures to reduce mosquito nuisance and prevent mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria.

"To prevent mosquito infestation, it is important to eliminate all stagnant water which is the potential breeding ground for mosquitoes," the spokesman said.

"Contractors should inspect their construction sites regularly to ensure that there are no abandoned containers and empty tins holding water.

"They should pump and drain stagnant water in holes, trenches and hollow spaces and fill them up with soil.

"Spray a thin layer of diesel oil on the water surface if draining of stagnant water is impossible."

The spokesman advised households to cover tightly all water containers, storage tanks and wells and leave no water in flower pot trays.

"Keep all drains free from choking," he said.

"It is an offence under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance to allow the accumulation of water liable to mosquito breeding. The maximum fine for the offence is \$10,000."

During the campaign period, exhibition boards will be put on public display at the unit's resource centre on the eighth floor of the Urban Council Fa Yuen Street Complex in Mong Kok.

"The centre also provides preview and loan service of educational materials like tapes and video tapes.

"A variety of printed materials such as posters, leaflets and stickers are also available free from the centre," the spokesman added.

Meanwhile, the department will be sending advisory letters, and educational leaflets and posters to owners incorporations, mutual aid committees, management offices of large private housing estates and building contractors to enlist support.

Educational printed materials will also be sent to schools, district environmental hygiene offices of the Urban Services and Regional Services, Home Affairs and Housing department for distribution.

Members of the public seeking advice or help in mosquito prevention may also contact the respective District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the Urban Services or Regional Services departments.

During the campaign period, an announcement of public interest will be broadcast on radio and television to advise on the practical means of mosquito prevention. This will be supplemented by having vans broadcasting anti-mosquito messages throughout the territory.

End

Public warned against using illegal cordless phones

* * * * *

The Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) today (Saturday) issued a warning to the public that the use of illegal cordless phones is not only liable to prosecution but will also bring them more trouble than the convenience and relatively cheap price they intended to bargain for.

The warning was issued amid the growing popularity of cordless phones in recent years and indications that many users are not aware that under the Telecommunication (Cordless Telephone Apparatus) (Exemption from Licensing) Order, only certain types of cordless telephones are approved to be used in the territory.

Cordless phones which do not conform to the specifications in the Exemption Order are prohibited to be sold or used in Hong Kong except for export purpose.

"It is because such telephones have caused interference to other authorised radio services, like the emergency channels of the police and the fire services, and cellular phones," said a Senior Controller of Telecommunications, Mr Andrew Tang.

About 400 complaints of interference caused by illegal cordless telephones have been received over the past five years.

To prevent the situation from going out of control, OFTA conducts raids on stores suspected of selling such telephones regularly.

He said: "A total of 52 raids were conducted last year, resulting in the seizure of over 600 sets of illegal cordless telephones. The retail value is estimated to be about \$500,000."

From the consumers' point of view, illegal cordless telephones are more attractive than the authorised ones because they are relatively low-priced.

However, he warned consumers not to risk prosecution for using such telephones.

"Any possession or use of illegal radio equipment is liable to fines up to \$50,000 and two years' imprisonment," he added.

Mr Tang also noted how the illegal cordless phones were not really bargains because they were prone to all sorts of problems.

Normally, radio dealers and manufacturers do not offer any maintenance to illegal cordless telephones, users have to pay more for maintenance and repairs.

"Generally speaking, the quality of such telephones are poor and some even do not work at all as their specifications in most cases fail to conform with the local requirements," he said.

Mr Tang pointed out that there was often no redress for users of illegal cordless phones faced with these problems because they knew it was illegal to use such types of cordless phones.

He advised consumers to look for cordless telephones with authorised label issued by the Telecommunications Authority.

The label is attached on the outside surface of the base unit and the handset.

OFTA maintains a computer record of approved cordless phones which is open for public inspection.

"They can also check about a certain name and model by telephoning 2961 6333," Mr Tang said.

Further information on cordless telephones can be obtained from OFTA on 2961 6680 or by fax 2803 5110. Internet users may browse for the latest information at website <http://www.ofa.gov.hk>.

End