

## LCQ7: Safety guidelines for staff on duty at swimming pools and beaches

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Following is a question by the Hon Lee Cheuk-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (June 21):

Question:

It was reported that on 17 May this year, when tropical cyclone warning signal No. 3 was in force, a lifeguard tower at a public swimming pool was flipped over by a gust of wind, causing injuries to a duty lifeguard on the tower. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it has drawn up any work safety guidelines to safeguard the safety of staff on duty at swimming pools and beaches managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, when tropical cyclone warning signals are in force and in severe weather conditions; if it has, of the details of such guidelines; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

Madam President,

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has all along attached importance to the work safety of its staff. As regards the arrangements for severe weather conditions including typhoons, rainstorms or thunderstorms, the LCSD has provided working guidelines to ensure the safety of its staff.

### Work Arrangements at Swimming Pools

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When Typhoon Signal No. 1 or 3 is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory and the weather remains normal, swimming pools under the LCSD will still be open to the public. Pool staff including lifeguards are therefore required to stay at their posts and continue to provide swimmers with lifesaving and first-aid services. However, when swimming pools are unsuitable for swimming due to worsened weather like rainstorm or thunderstorm, officers-in-charge of the pools will request swimmers to leave the pool water. Pool staff including lifeguards will also go to sheltered and safe places where they will continue performing duties with a view to preventing swimmers from returning to the pools to swim so as to avoid accidents. When

Typhoon Signal No. 8 forecast is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory during the opening hours of swimming pools, pool staff will immediately notify swimmers of the forecast and advise them to leave the pools as quickly as possible. Pool staff on duty will also go off duty in an orderly manner according to the arrangements. As for the recent incident during which a lifeguard tower at Tseung Kwan O Swimming Pool was flipped over by a gust of wind, the LCSD has carried out a complete overhaul and reinforced the lifeguard tower to prevent recurrence of accidents.

#### Work Arrangements at Beaches

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When Typhoon Signal No. 1 or 3 is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory and the weather remains normal, beaches under the LCSD will still be open to the public. Staff working at beaches including lifeguards are therefore required to stay at their posts and continue to provide swimmers with lifesaving and first-aid services. However, when beaches are unsuitable for swimming activities due to rough sea or severe weather conditions like rainstorm or thunderstorm, the officers-in-charge of the beaches will request swimmers to go back to the shore immediately. Lifeguards on duty in rescue boats will also go back to the shore and stand by at sheltered and safe places, while those on duty at sheltered lifeguard towers with lightning conductors will continue to stay at their posts. When all swimmers have gone back to the shore, officers-in-charge of the beaches will arrange for lifeguards on duty at lifeguard towers to return to the beach offices where they will continue performing the duty of overseeing the safety of swimmers. When Typhoon Signal No. 8 forecast is issued by the Hong Kong Observatory during the opening hours of beaches, the officers-in-charge of beaches will immediately notify swimmers of the forecast and advise them to leave the beaches. Staff on duty at the beaches will also go off duty in an orderly manner according to the arrangements.

The LCSD will keep the work arrangements under review to ensure the safety of its staff and members of the public.

Ends/Wednesday, June 21, 2006

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