**Introduction**

Each year, Hong Kong experiences typhoons, rainstorms and thunderstorms between mid-spring and mid-autumn, and strong monsoon winds in summer and winter. These adverse weather conditions may cause accidents at workplaces.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Chapter 509) and Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Chapter 59), employers/proprietors have the obligation to ensure the safety and health of their employees at work. Meanwhile, employees have the duty to take care of themselves, as well as others, and to co-operate with their employers/proprietors to comply with the safety requirements.

Where employees are required to work during inclement weather, their employers/proprietors should ensure that all risks are eliminated or effectively reduced to the minimum.

This guide aims to enhance the safety awareness of both employers/proprietors and employees, with a view to avoiding accidents at workplaces in times of inclement weather.

**Work Hazards in times of Inclement Weather**

Inclement Weather may create danger to people working outdoors, especially in exposed areas. Sometimes, people working in covered structures of indoor may also be affected.

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**Sources of hazards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclement Weather</th>
<th>Strong wind</th>
<th>Lightning</th>
<th>Persistent rain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typhoon</td>
<td>Thunderstorm</td>
<td>Rainstorm</td>
<td>Electric shock or electrocution due to leakage of current from wet electrical equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong monsoon</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Winds</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Consequences</th>
<th>Electric shock or electrocution due to leakage of current from wet electrical equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collapse of temporary structures or plants causing injury to persons nearby and damage to property</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of body balance resulting in falls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flying or falling objects</td>
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</tbody>
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**Safety Precautions Before Commencement of Work**

1. Conduct risk assessment on working under inclement weather conditions, identify and analyse the hazards.
2. Formulate safety plan and emergency plans with documented procedures on communication of weather information, safety arrangements, immediate assistance, use of protective equipment and facilities and back up services, etc.
3. Formulate training programme and provide training to employees on hazards, and thus precautions, in inclement weather conditions.
4. Appoint an overseer to monitor changes in weather conditions likely to affect the safety of employees.
5. Install appropriate warning systems, such as anemometers and lightning warning systems, with regard to the nature of work to give employees real time warning to take appropriate measures.
6. Provide safe shelters or structures that can protect employees from the adverse effects of strong wind, lightning and rainstorm.
7. Cranes and other lifting equipment should be properly bonded to earth for protection from lightning.
8. Provide communication systems, radio, and appropriate personal protective equipment for use by employees who have specific duties in times of inclement weather.
9. Provide safe means of transport and routes for evacuation to safe shelters in the event of adverse weather conditions.

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**Upon receiving Warning Signals during Work**

1. In the event of warnings issued by the Hong Kong Observatory, follow the established safety procedures.
2. Suspend immediately all outdoor work in exposed areas where employees are liable to be endangered by the adverse weather conditions such as rainstorms, thunderstorms and typhoon. Employees should take shelter in safe places.
3. Inspect indoor workplaces and consider suspension of those work that cannot be performed safely.
4. Listen to the latest weather broadcasts issued by the Hong Kong Observatory and prepare for immediate evacuation from the workplace.

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**After Cancellation of Warning Signals**

1. Assess the effects of adverse weather conditions on the workplace and prohibit entry into areas that are still dangerous.
2. Listen to weather broadcast and maintain the highest alertness to possible return of thunderstorms, rainstorms and typhoon shortly after the cancellation or dissolving of the warning signal.
3. Resume work only after a thorough examination to ensure the safe working condition of lifting equipment, scaffolds, suspended working platforms, electrical installations, and other plants.