

以人為本 優化高溫警告制度

Putting Workers First: Improving Hong Kong's Heat Warning System

受熱帶氣旋「白海豚」外圍下沉氣流影響，本港連日錄得極端高溫天氣，天文台總部周日錄得最高氣溫36.9度，是1884年有紀錄以來最高。上水更一度逼近40度。然而，面對百年一遇的酷熱天氣，勞工處的「工作暑熱警告」一直維持在低級別的「黃色」，這反映現有制度存在不足，起不到保障戶外工作者權益的應有作用。勞工處表示將在今個暑假內完成制度檢討。

「工作暑熱警告」於2023年推出，分為黃、紅、黑三級，迄今共發出200多次警告，全為黃色，一次紅色或黑色都沒有。今年4月，勞工處改良警告啟動機制，改用多個監測點及較寬鬆比例，原本預期今年夏天觸發高級別警告的機率會提高。結果事與願違，即使香港遭遇「142年來最熱的一天」，高警告級別仍未能啟動，令人疑惑。

問題出在哪裏？首先，工作暑熱警告原是針對一般大眾設計，由於市民大部分時間在室內活動，指數中太陽暴曬的分量很少，未能充分考慮建築、清潔、運輸等露天工作的處境。紅色警告標準設在暑熱指數32以上，意味着在溫度、濕度、太陽輻射等多项指標需要同時達到極端水平才會觸發，門檻高到難達，根本是脫離現實。有專家指出，勞工處或許用錯指標，應該採用國際標準的「濕球溫度」和「黑球溫度」，兩者結合為「濕球黑球溫度」，準確反映熱壓力，廣泛應用於國際職業安全和戶外工作防署標準。

其次，目前的工作暑熱警告只是一套行政指引，沒有法律效力。勞工處只能勸喻僱主在酷熱天氣下讓僱員適當休息，但如果僱主不跟從，打工仔只能「頂硬上」。一旦中暑，亦難以獲得工傷補償，原因是中暑至今並未納入法定職業病清單。一個沒有法律效力的警告制度，加上一套與現實脫節的指標，自然是「無牙老虎」。相比之下，香港應對颱風、暴雨等惡劣天氣設立了相對完善的警告及配套制度，在什麼情況下停工、停課以及交通安排如何，都有清晰指引，讓整個社會有所遵從。

對於近日各界發出的批評質疑聲音，勞工處已經聽到了，並且作出了積極回應。勞工處處長許澤森昨日表示，處方在極端高溫出現後已即時檢視後台數據，了解是個別數據問題抑或是制度設計有缺陷。目前正與天文台商討優化工作暑熱警告，調整觸發門檻，令其敏感度更高。至於改革時間表，許澤森表示「希望盡快」，會在暑假結束前完成。

勞工處優化酷熱警告制度，既有坊間建議可供參考，也有他山之石可資借鑒。澳門勞工事務局明確規定，當氣溫達到34度或以上，僱主需向戶外工作者提供適當的防護措施。內地的高溫補貼制度實施多年，近年將制度進一步優化，高溫健康風險預警由國家氣象局與國家疾控部門聯合發布。事實上，極端高溫下不僅容易誘發中暑，還可能引發熱痙攣、熱衰竭、腸胃不適、空調病等問題，並導致慢性病惡化。今年歐洲熱浪已造成2萬5千人死亡，引起全球高度關注。

特區政府傾聽民意，表示將檢討高溫警告制度、提高其敏感性，此外還可研究將中暑等高溫疾病納入職業病清單，為戶外工作者制訂更清晰且具約束力的保障框架。

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Under the influence of the subsiding air associated with Tropical Cyclone Podul, Hong Kong has recorded days of extreme heat. The Hong Kong Observatory Headquarters registered a maximum temperature of 36.9° C on Sunday, the highest since records began in 1884, with Sheung Shui coming close to 40° C. Yet in the face of this once-in-a-century heatwave, the Labour Department's Heat Stress at Work Warning has remained at the lowest, Amber, level throughout. This is a clear indication that the existing system falls short of its intended purpose of safeguarding the interests of outdoor workers. The Labour Department has stated that it will complete a review of the system within this summer.

Introduced in 2023, the Heat Stress at Work Warning comprises three levels: Amber, Red and Black. To date, more than 200 warnings have been issued, every one of them Amber, with not a single Red or Black warning ever triggered. In April this year, the Labour Department refined the warning mechanism by incorporating readings from additional monitoring stations and adopting a more relaxed threshold. It was expected that higher-level warnings would become more likely to be triggered this summer. Contrary to expectations, even Hong Kong's hottest day in 142 years failed to trigger a higher-level warning. This result has left many puzzled.

Where, then, does the problem lie? In the first place, the Heat Stress at Work Warning was originally designed with the general public in mind. As most members of the public spend the greater part of their time indoors, the index attaches relatively little weight to direct sun exposure, and fails to adequately account for the conditions faced by those working outdoors in construction, cleansing and transport. The threshold for a Red warning is set at a Heat Index reading of 32 or above, meaning that multiple indicators, including temperature, humidity and solar radiation, must simultaneously reach extreme levels before it is triggered. Such a threshold is unreasonably high and, in essence, **divorced from reality**. Some experts have pointed out that the Labour Department may be relying on the wrong indicators, and should instead adopt internationally recognised measures such as Wet Bulb Temperature and Black Globe Temperature, which combine to form the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT). This measure accurately reflects heat stress and is widely applied in international **occupational safety** and outdoor heat-prevention standards.

Secondly, the current Heat Stress at Work Warning amounts to no more than an administrative guideline, devoid of legal force. The Labour Department can only advise employers to allow employees appropriate rest during hot weather. Where employers fail to comply, workers have little choice but to carry on regardless. Should a worker suffer heatstroke, obtaining compensation for a work injury remains difficult, given that heatstroke has yet to be included in the **statutory** list of occupational diseases. A warning system with no legal force, compounded by indicators divorced from reality, is inevitably **little more than a "toothless tiger"**. By comparison, Hong Kong has established a relatively comprehensive system of warnings and accompanying arrangements for adverse weather such as typhoons and rainstorms. Clear guidelines set out when work and classes should be suspended and how transport arrangements should be made, provides the whole of society with a clear framework to follow.

In response to the criticism and doubts voiced by various sectors in recent days, the Labour Department has taken note and responded positively. The Commissioner for Labour, Mr Chris Sun, stated yesterday that the Department had reviewed the back-end data immediately after the recent extreme

heat. It sought to determine whether the issue lay with individual data readings or with flaws in the system's design. The Department is currently discussing with the Hong Kong Observatory ways to refine the Heat Stress at Work Warning, including adjusting the triggering thresholds so as to enhance its sensitivity. As for the timetable for reform, Mr Sun indicated that the Department hopes to complete it "as soon as possible", before the end of the summer.

In refining the heat warning system, the Labour Department may **draw on** suggestions from the community as well as lessons from elsewhere. Macao's Labour Affairs Bureau expressly requires that once temperatures reach 34° C or above, employers must provide outdoor workers with appropriate protective measures. On the Mainland, the high-temperature subsidy system has been in place for many years and has been further refined in recent years, with high-temperature health risk warnings now jointly issued by the national meteorological authority and the national disease control authority. Indeed, extreme heat is liable not only to induce heatstroke, but also heat cramps, heat exhaustion, gastrointestinal discomfort, air-conditioning illness and other conditions, and may **exacerbate** chronic diseases. This year's heatwaves in Europe have already claimed 25,000 lives, drawing intense global concern.

Having listened to public opinion, the SAR Government has indicated that it will review the heat warning system and enhance its sensitivity. It could, in addition, examine the inclusion of heat-related illnesses such as heatstroke in the list of occupational diseases, and **formulate a clearer and more binding protective framework** for outdoor workers.

常用詞彙

● **occupational** (職業的、與工作相關的 adj.)

例：Construction workers face a range of occupational hazards, including heat stress and physical injury. (建築工人面對多種職業風險，包括熱壓力及身體受傷。)

應用情境：討論職場安全、勞工保障議題的必備詞彙，常見搭配有occupational disease (職業病)、occupational hazard (職業風險)、occupational safety (職業安全)，適合Paper 2寫作涉及職場、勞工權益題目，或Paper 4口試討論工作環境話題。

● **statutory** (法定的、法律規定的 adj.)

例：Employers are required to provide a statutory minimum wage to all workers. (僱主必須向所有員工提供法定最低工資。)

應用情境：討論政策、法例、勞工權益等題目時常用，可與legally binding、mandatory搭配使用，展現對法律及制度議題的精準表達，適合Paper 2撰寫報告、議論文提及法規時使用。

● **exacerbate** (使惡化、加劇 v.)

例：Air pollution can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma. (空氣污染會加劇哮喘等呼吸系統疾病。)

應用情境：討論健康、環境議題時，用以表達「令原有問題變得更嚴重」，比make worse更為正式，語感亦比aggravate略為書面化，適合Paper 2議論文分析後果之段落，或Paper 4討論公共衛生議題時使用。

寫作應用

一、如何寫「問題與不足」

● **divorced from reality** (脫離現實)

字面意思是「與現實分離」，即「不切實際」，常用以形容政策、指標、理論與現實脫節，是進階寫作中可加分的表達。

例句：Critics argue that the new curriculum is divorced from reality and fails to prepare students for the workplace. (批評者認為新課程脫離現實，未能讓學生為職場做好準備。)

近義詞辨析：

out of touch with reality (與現實脫節，較口語化，程度較輕)
unrealistic(不切實際，語氣最直接、最平淡)
detached from real-world conditions (與實際情況脫節，較正式、學術化)

二、如何寫「質疑與批評」

● **little more than a "toothless tiger"** (形同虛設)

little more than X即「不過是X而已」，帶輕蔑語氣；"toothless tiger"為常見比喻，形容表面有權力、實際缺乏執行力的制度或機構。

例句：Without proper enforcement, the anti-littering law is little more than a toothless tiger. (若無適當執法，反亂拋垃圾法例形同虛設。)

近義詞辨析：

ineffective (無效的，較平淡直接)
lacking real teeth (缺乏實際約束力，語氣接近但較口語)
purely symbolic (純屬象徵性，強調「有名無實」)

三、如何寫「借鑒與參考」

● **draw on** (借助、參考)

draw on即汲取、參考(資源、經驗、意見)，屬書面語常用片語動詞。學生作文常誤用"refer to"代替，其實draw on更能貼切表達「善用某種資源作出決定」的意思。

例句：In improving its policy, the department can draw on both suggestions from the community and experience from other places. (部門在優化政策時，既可參考社會建議，亦可借鑒外地經驗。)

近義詞辨析：

refer to (提及、參考，較中性、較弱)
take reference from (參照，較口語化)
build on (在……基礎上發展，強調延續而非單純參考)

四、如何寫「改善與建議」

● **formulate a clearer and more binding protective framework** (制訂更清晰、更具約束力的保障框架)

formulate指「制訂、擬定」(政策、計劃)，比make或create更正式、更具官方語感；binding指「有約束力的」(法律用語)，framework即「框架、制度」。此句式非常適合作文結尾提出建議：formulate a + adj + adj + framework/mechanism/policy to do sth。

例句：The government should formulate a clearer and more binding policy to regulate the use of AI in schools. (政府應制訂更清晰、更具約束力的政策，規管人工智能在校園的使用。)

近義詞辨析：

set up a system to (建立制度，較中性、較口語)
put in place a mechanism to (設立機制，較正式)
institute a binding regime to (訂立具約束力的制度，語氣最正式、最強硬)