

Bills Committee on Employees' Compensation (Amendment) Bill 2021

Information provided by the Government on issues requested by the Bills Committee at its meeting on 12 March 2021

Introduction

This paper provides information on the issues requested by Members of the Bills Committee on the Employees' Compensation (Amendment) Bill 2021 at the meeting held on 12 March 2021.

Activation of the mechanism for the Steering Committee for Handling Super Typhoons (or other natural disasters of a substantial scale) chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration to make an announcement stating the existence of extreme conditions that arise from a super typhoon or other natural disaster of a substantial scale

Inter-departmental review after Super Typhoon Mangkhut

2. After Super Typhoon Mangkhut in September 2018, the Government has conducted an inter-departmental review of the handling mechanism to improve Hong Kong's preparedness, emergency response and recovery efforts for future super typhoons (or other natural disasters of a substantial scale). One of the new measures is that in the event of a super typhoon (or other natural disaster of a substantial scale) and if special circumstances and needs warrant, an inter-departmental Steering Committee for Handling Super Typhoons (or other natural disasters of a substantial scale) (Steering Committee) will be set up to oversee the Government's efforts during the preparedness, response and recovery stages. The Steering Committee, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS), will comprise relevant Principal Officials as members and be supported by relevant bureaux and departments (B/Ds). The set-up, functions and mode of operation of the Steering Committee are set out in the latest version of the Government's Contingency Plan for Natural Disasters¹.

¹ The Contingency Plan for Natural Disasters sets out the Government's strategy, organisational framework and alerting system for responding to natural disasters. It

Activation of Steering Committee

3. In the event of a super typhoon (or other natural disaster of a substantial scale), the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) will discuss with the Security Bureau (SB) the potential impact of the super typhoon / natural disaster on Hong Kong for SB's reporting to CS as necessary. Taking into account SB's advice and the actual circumstances, CS will consider if there is a need to form a Steering Committee. Factors to be taken into account include the anticipated strength and the predictability of the natural disaster, the duration that Hong Kong will likely be affected, the damage and disruption that it would likely cause to Hong Kong, and the anticipated time needed for recovery work. Whether the Steering Committee will be formed, and if so for which stage(s) of the work (i.e. preparedness, response or recovery) and which B/Ds are to provide the requisite support would depend on the nature and degree of gravity of the issues to be addressed, operational needs and circumstances involved. The Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre of SB (during the preparedness and response phases, as well as the early part of the recovery phase) would provide secretariat support, with assistance from other relevant Emergency Control / Command Centres operated by other B/Ds.

Announcement of "extreme conditions"

4. In the case where a super typhoon (or other natural disaster of a substantial scale) seriously affects the working public to resume work effectively², CS may, having regard to the views of the Steering Committee and if the situation warrants, make a territory-wide "extreme conditions" announcement to provide for extended hours for resumption of work. CS will specify in the announcement a period within which "extreme conditions" exist. In the case of a super typhoon, an announcement will be made before

has been uploaded to the Security Bureau's website for reference by members of the public.

² Examples of scenarios that may seriously affect the working public to resume work effectively or bring safety concern for a prolonged period include: 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.

HKO replaces Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 with Typhoon Warning Signal No. 3. In considering whether “extreme conditions” should be announced, the Steering Committee will consider factors including the strength and impact of the super typhoon / natural disaster, multi-hazard situations arising from the super typhoon / natural disaster (e.g. storm surge and heavy rain), and other scenarios that, depending on the degree of disruption and the scale of it, should seriously and for a prolonged period affect the working public to resume work effectively. During the first two-hour period when the “extreme conditions” is in force, CS and the Steering Committee will continue to review the situation. If it is considered that “extreme conditions” persist, CS may, having regard to the views of the Steering Committee, make a further announcement to extend the “extreme conditions” by the end of this two-hour period.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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