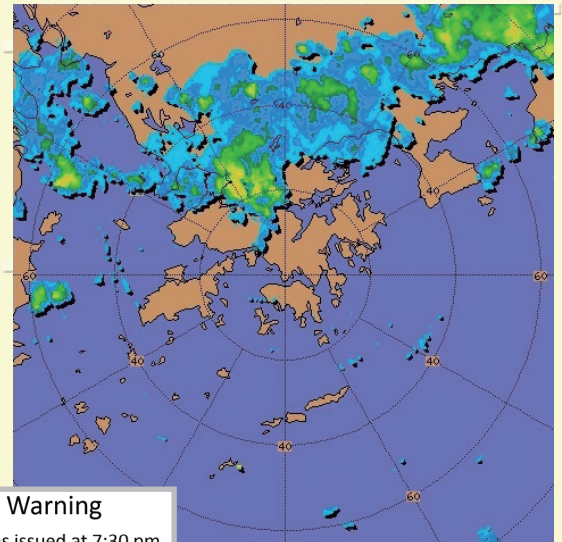
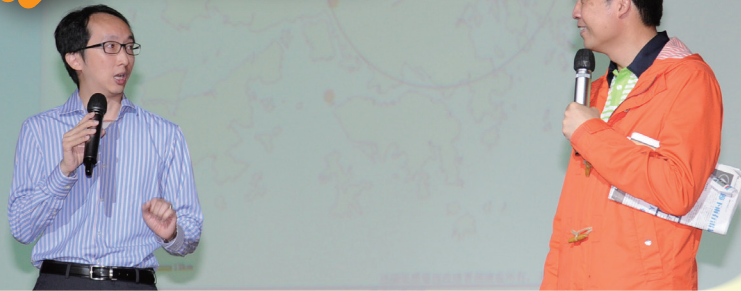


Debunking Myths

Unfolding the Mysteries of Weather Warnings

LEE Lap-shun



Every summer, the Central Forecasting Office receives enquires on thunderstorms and heavy rain. Here are the answers to three frequently asked questions as well as some useful tips.

Q: Sometimes when the Observatory issues a thunderstorm warning, the weather is perfectly fine where I am. Why is that?

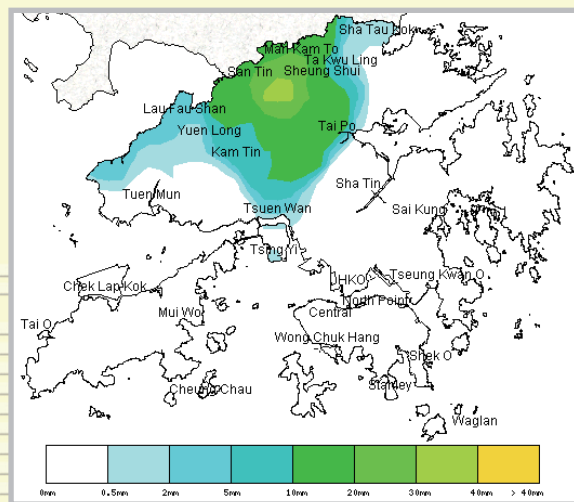
A: This happens more commonly in the summer. On a sunny day, the temperature in the New Territories rises more quickly than it does in the rest of Hong Kong. The relatively active convective air movement triggers isolated thunderstorms, which will prompt the Observatory to issue a thunderstorm warning.

Useful tip: We suggest that you pay attention to the affected areas that are mentioned in the thunderstorm warning and also check the Lightning Location Map on the Observatory's website to get a better idea of the distribution of thunderstorms in Hong Kong.

Thunderstorm Warning

Thunderstorm Warning was issued at 7:30 pm. It will be valid until 8:30 pm today. Isolated thunderstorms are expected to occur **over the northern part of New Territories.**

Radar picture showing thunderstorms occurring mostly in the northern part of the New Territories.



Q: Sometimes it can be pouring with rain where I am, but the Observatory hasn't issued a rainstorm warning. Why is that?

A: The intensity of rainfall can vary greatly across different parts of Hong Kong. When it issues a rainstorm warning signal, the Observatory mainly takes into consideration the rainfall over a wide expanse of Hong Kong, and it will not issue a warning if heavy rain is falling only in small, isolated areas.

Useful tip: We suggest that you check the Observatory's Special Weather Tips and the latest weather forecast for information on isolated downpours.

Special Weather Tips

Thunder showers are affecting Hong Kong. Showers are heavy over parts of the territory. In the past hour, more than 30 millimetres of rainfall were recorded over Sheung Shui. Members of the public should be on the alert.

The uneven distribution of rainfall is highlighted in this rainfall distribution map, which shows over 30 mm of rain in some areas in the New Territories, but none at all recorded in Kowloon, Hong Kong and Lantau.

Q: Why is there sometimes a sudden heavy shower, even though the Observatory did not mention rain in its forecast from just a few days ago?

A: Currently, the Observatory mainly refers to the output from numerical weather prediction models when it formulates its weather forecast for the next few days, and the accuracy of the forecast will generally decrease as the forecast range increases. In addition, heavy rain is caused by a number of factors that are not always easy to predict accurately a few days in advance. Most importantly, Hong Kong is a small place and slight changes in the location and movement of rain bands can bring completely different amounts of rainfall.

Useful tip: When you refer to the 9-day Weather Forecast, be aware of the uncertainty involved. And pay close attention to the Observatory's forecast updates. Generally speaking, the closer the date of forecast, the more accurate it will be.

9-day Weather Forecast								Updated at 11:30 HKT	
Date	20 Jun Fri	21 Jun Sat	22 Jun Sun	23 Jun Mon	24 Jun Tue	25 Jun Wed	26 Jun Thu	27 Jun Fri	28 Jun Sat
Weather									
Temp (°C)	27 - 31	27 - 30	27 - 30	27 - 31	28 - 32	28 - 32	28 - 33	28 - 32	28 - 32
RH (%)	75 - 95	80 - 95	80 - 95	75 - 95	70 - 95	70 - 95	65 - 95	75 - 95	75 - 95