

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

January 26 - February 1, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The PM 2.5 situation in Lampang province has exceeded healthy standards for 5 consecutive days due to forest fires in Doi Phrabat, Phrabat sub-district, Mueang district, which is in the Khao-Lang-Phrabat National Park. The air quality has started to affect the health of the public. The province has mobilized fire trucks and relevant personnel to control the situation.
- The Pattaya City Business and Tourism Association is concerned about the shortage of labor. Concerns were raised regarding laws set by the Ministry of Labor and the Department of Employment for housekeeping work, which currently relies on foreign labor. The Ministry of Labor announced that foreign workers, with the permission of the employer and under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), are allowed to work in two types of jobs: manual labor and retail sales. Manual labor includes housekeeping and cleaning work, which does not violate any laws.
- The Ministry of Public Security, Lao People's Democratic Republic published the Road Accident Report 2022. The highest number of road accidents was recorded in Vientiane. The main causes of accidents were drunk driving, speeding, and sudden changes in direction. Road accidents in 2022 cost the economy over \$6 million.

THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH PREPARES TO DEAL WITH **PM 2.5**

The Ministry of Public Health disclosed that the fine particulate matter (PM 2.5) situation in Thailand is intensifying and according to the health reporting system of the Ministry of Public Health, the number of patients with air pollution-related diseases has increased significantly. The majority of cases reported have been respiratory diseases, skin infections, and eye infections. The areas where PM 2.5 has exceeded the normal standards were found in the northern, central and northeastern regions, while the overall air quality levels were measured to be from moderate to the early stages of having health impacts.

The forecast for PM 2.5 concentration for the period from January to February 2023 is expected to be more severe than 2022, especially for high-risk groups. The groups most likely to be directly affected by PM 2.5 pollution include children, elderly, pregnant women, and individuals with pre-existing health conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, skin and eye irritation. Exposure to PM 2.5 can have a greater impact on health than on the general population. Currently, the Ministry of Public Health has instructed all provincial health offices to closely monitor the situation. If the PM 2.5 level in any province exceeds 51 micrograms/cubic meter for more than three consecutive days, the public health emergency operations centers should be activated for systematic management of the situation.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

The officials should coordinate with the Environmental Health Division, local health offices, and local organizations to inform the public about the dangers of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5). There should be announcements in the community if the levels of PM 2.5 are abnormally high. The Department of Health has provided "The Public Guide to PM 2.5 Awareness and Safety" which describes how people can protect themselves from PM 2.5 and how to safely continue their daily lives. This is especially important on days when PM 2.5 levels exceed the normal standards.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY



Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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