

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB133

Question Serial No.

0958

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: Some ambulances of the Fire Services Department experienced mechanical failure because of ageing. Is there any provision for procurement of new ambulances in 2009-10? Besides, what is the progress of the study on the Medical Priority Dispatch System? When will the System be formally implemented?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Kin-por

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) has earmarked a total of \$145 million in 2009-10 for the procurement of 185 ambulances, including 161 replacement town ambulances, three replacement village ambulances, and 21 additional town ambulances.

After all 161 town ambulances mentioned above have been delivered by batches in 2009 and 2010, the age of FSD's ambulance fleet will be reduced from the current average of around 8 years to 1.7 years.

FSD has commissioned a consultancy to examine the feasibility of introducing a Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) in Hong Kong and to analyse the implications of various response time options. The Security Bureau and FSD will consult the Legislative Council and the public on the specific proposals and details of the MPDS within 2009.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB134

Question Serial No.

1866

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: The total number of emergency calls increased from 573 657 in 2007 to 600 828 in 2008. Please provide a breakdown of the total number of emergency calls in 2008 by nature or degree of emergency.

Asked by: Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply: At present, the Fire Services Department does not classify emergency calls by their nature or degree of emergency.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB135

Question Serial No.

1867

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: Did the Administration reserve any resources for the consultation on the introduction of the Medical Priority Dispatch System in Hong Kong? If the reply is in the affirmative, when will the consultation begin and what are the details?

Asked by: Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) has commissioned a consultancy to examine the feasibility of introducing a Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) in Hong Kong and to analyse the implications of various response time options. The Security Bureau and FSD will consult the Legislative Council and the public on the specific proposals and details of the MPDS within 2009. FSD will absorb the cost of consultation from within its existing resources.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title Director of Fire Services

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB136

Question Serial No.

0604

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: The actual number of “emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage” has surged by 24.5% from 35 135 in 2007 to 43 741 in 2008. What was the impact of such significant increase on the daily operations? On what basis did the Department arrive at the estimated number of 43 000 in 2009, which is somewhat similar to that in 2008, instead of a further increase?

Asked by: Hon. IP LAU Suk-yee, Regina

Reply: Emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage refer to the arrangement when all major fire appliances in a fire station have been turned out for emergency services, the Fire Services Communication Centre will immediately re-deploy fire appliances from other fire stations to that station to ensure fire appliances are available on stand-by and ready for handling emergency calls in all districts at all times.

The number of emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage of the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2008 was 43 741, an increase of about 25% as compared with 35 135 in 2007. This was mainly due to the inclement weather conditions in certain months in 2008. During June and July 2008, the number of false alarms and the number of calls from persons shut in lift increased as a result of prolonged and frequent thunderstorms and lightning, thereby increasing the number of cases where the Department needed to redeploy temporarily fire appliances of other fire stations to stand by for the handling of emergency calls. However, such temporary move-up arrangements did not have any significant impact on the daily operation of the fire stations.

FSD mainly made reference to past figures when projecting the number of emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage in 2009. It is estimated that even if there are inclement weather conditions in 2009 similar to those in 2008, the number of emergency move-ups to provide operational coverage in 2009 will be close to that of 2008.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB137

Question Serial No.

0605

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title): 603 Plant, vehicles
and equipment

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: In respect of Subhead 603 Plant, vehicles and equipment under Capital Account, the figure of 2009-10 increases by 133% as compared with the revised estimate of 2008-09. Please state the reason for the increase.

Asked by: Hon. IP LAU Suk-yee, Regina

Reply: Subhead 603 "Plant, vehicles and equipment" under Capital Account covers the procurement of plant, specialised vehicles and equipment, each costing more than \$2 million, and dinghies and launches irrespective of value. The cash flow requirement of individual procurement item each year is adjusted according to the payment schedule stipulated in the contract concerned.

The provision for Subhead 603 "Plant, vehicles and equipment" in 2009-10 is about \$172.3 million, which is 133% higher than the revised estimate of 2008-09. The main reason being that according to the payment schedule, a total of \$161.3 million will have to be paid in 2009-10 for the fire appliances approved for replacement in previous financial years. Hence, the net cash flow will increase by about \$87.6 million as compared with the revised estimate in 2008-09 (about \$73.7 million). In addition, the Fire Services Department has to set aside a cash flow of about \$11 million for payment on the procurement of replacement or additional fire appliances and equipment approved in 2009-10.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB138

Question Serial No.

2481

Head: 45 Fire Services Subhead (No. & title): 603 Plant, vehicles
Department and equipment

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: As regards the procurement of plants, vehicles and equipment in the 2009-10 estimate, what is the provision amount and ratio used for Fire Service and Ambulance? Does the estimate include the expenditure for the scheduled replacement of the existing radio communications system in 2009-10? And what are the details? What is the total number of ambulances that the Fire Services Department (FSD) will procure in 2009-10? What is the number of ambulances FSD needs to procure in order to fully address the problem of ageing ambulances?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kin-ye, Miriam

Reply: In 2009-10, the total estimated expenditure of the Fire Services Department (FSD) under Subhead 603 "Plant, vehicles and equipment" as well as Subhead 661 "Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)" for the replacement and procurement of minor plants, vehicles and equipment is \$339 million. Of which, the estimated expenditure related to the fire service is about \$194 million, accounting for 57.2% of the total. The estimated expenditure related to the ambulance service is about \$145 million, accounting for the remaining 42.8%.

The above subheads do not include the expenditure for the proposed replacement of FSD's existing radio communications system, which requires funding approval from the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council. We estimate that the total non-recurrent cost of the replacement system will be about \$178.3 million. Subject to the FC's approval, the new system is expected to be commissioned by July 2011.

With regard to ambulances, FSD has earmarked the necessary funding in 2009-10 for the procurement of 185 ambulances, including 161 replacement town ambulances, three replacement village ambulances, and 21 additional town ambulances.

After all 161 town ambulances mentioned above have been delivered by batches in 2009 and 2010, the age of FSD's ambulance fleet will be reduced from the current average of around 8 years to 1.7 years.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB139

Question Serial No.

1284

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: In 2008, the number of Fire Hazard Abatement Notices issued by the Department doubled as against 2007. Was it because of the increased number of inspections or were there any other reasons?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: Under the Programme of Fire Protection and Prevention, the Fire Services Department (FSD) issued 4 951 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) in 2008, which was 2 687 more than the 2 264 FHANs issued in 2007. The increase can be attributed mainly to the stepping up of inspection of fire safety installations and equipment, old buildings and licensed premises by the FSD in 2008. The number of relevant inspections increased from 137 417 in 2007 to 156 730 in 2008. Furthermore, there were several cases in which FHANs had to be issued to all individual flat owners due to the absence of Owners' Incorporations in their buildings, thereby contributing to the significant increase in the number of FHANs issued.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB140

Question Serial No.

1285

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: In 2008, the number of lectures and advisory services given by the Department increased by nearly ten thousand as compared with 2007. What was the reason? What were the venues in which these increased lectures and advisory services took place?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The number of lectures and advisory services rendered by the Fire Services Department in 2008 was 38 072, an increase of 29% as compared with 29 568 in 2007. This is mainly due to an increase in the number of public enquiries related to the "fire safety directions" issued under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, and an increase in the number of general fire safety enquiries by the public and their demand for relevant lectures after the No. 5 alarm fire at Cornwall Court on 10 August 2008. Fire safety lectures are usually conducted at the premises of District Councils, District Fire Safety Committees, community halls, owners' corporations or mutual aid committees.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION****SB141**

Question Serial No.

1286

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):Programme: (1) Fire ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire ServicesDirector of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: The provision in 2009-10 under this Programme is \$86.1 million higher than the revised estimate for 2008-09. How much of this increased provision is for the filling of vacancies? What are the posts and their numbers involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The provision in 2009-10 under Fire Services Department's Programme (1) Fire Service is \$2,371 million, which is \$86.10 million higher than the revised estimate of \$2,284.9 million in 2008-09. Of the increased amount, \$24.06 million was caused by the filling of 246 vacancies in 2008-09, leading to an increase in the full-year expenditure in 2009-10. The posts concerned, the number of posts and the relevant expenditure in 2008-09 and 2009-10 are set out in the table below:

<u>Post</u>	<u>Number of vacancies filled in 2008-09</u>	<u>Expenditure involved in the 2008-09 revised estimate (from the date of entry)</u>	<u>Expenditure involved in the 2009-10 estimate (full-year)</u>
Station Officer	52	\$8.12 million	\$18.90 million
Fireman	186	\$20.15 million	\$32.78 million
Station Officer (Control)	2	\$240,000	\$650,000
Senior Fireman (Control)	6	\$1.22 million	\$1.46 million
Total:	246	\$29.73 million	\$53.79 million

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNGPost Title Director of Fire ServicesDate 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB142

Question Serial No.

1287

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: The Department will continue to step up inspection of pre-1973 buildings in 2009. How were the inspection work and its progress in 2008? What is the expected progress in 2009?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Cap 572, hereinafter "the Ordinance") has commenced operation on 1 July 2007, with a view to enhancing the fire safety standards of composite and domestic buildings constructed before 1987.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Ordinance, the Fire Services Department (FSD) inspected a total of 842 composite buildings in collaboration with the Buildings Department, and issued 12 560 fire safety directions in 2008, requiring the owners and occupiers concerned to improve the fire service installations and equipment in their buildings.

In the new financial year, FSD will create 39 time-limited posts to speed up the inspection under the Ordinance, with a view to improving the fire safety of composite and domestic buildings constructed before 1987 as soon as possible. The number of target buildings to be inspected by FSD will be increased from 840 in 2008 to 1 000 in 2009.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB143

Question Serial No.

1288

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: In monitoring fire safety standards in industrial buildings, what was the number of prosecutions instituted and the number of advisory letters issued in 2008? What were the common problems found? Did the Department assess whether the situation was serious, and would there be a need for additional manpower to tackle the situation?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) has always kept the fire safety standards of industrial buildings under close monitoring. Under the Programme of Fire Protection and Prevention, FSD inspected 597 industrial buildings and issued 2 549 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs) in 2008, mainly for defective fire service installations, equipment and smoke stop doors. Among the FHANs issued, 2 369 of them have already been complied with. The deadline for compliance has yet to expire for 178 of the FHANs. There were two cases of prosecution taken against persons who failed to comply with the requirements of the FHANs issued. In addition, there were 8 cases of prosecution for the storage of excessive amount of dangerous goods without licence.

FSD is of the view that fire safety in industrial buildings is not a serious concern at the moment.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB144

Question Serial No.

1289

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: In 2009, the Fire Services Department will continue to explore the feasibility of introducing a Medical Priority Dispatch System in Hong Kong. What is the progress in this regard? Are there any specific targets of work?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) has commissioned a consultancy to examine the feasibility of introducing a Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) in Hong Kong and to analyse the implications of various response time options. The Security Bureau and FSD will consult the Legislative Council and the public on the specific proposals and details of the MPDS within 2009.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG** _____

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services** _____

Date _____ **19.3.2009** _____

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB145

Question Serial No.

1290

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: What are the implementation progress of the Rapid Response Vehicle Scheme, and its programme details in 2009-10? What were the outcomes of this Scheme since implementation?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) launched the Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) Scheme in November 2006. Each RRV is manned by an Ambulance Officer. The main function of the Scheme is to provide support to frontline ambulance personnel. The Ambulance Officer will also perform service quality assurance duties to enhance frontline management and operational efficiency. At present, FSD has a total of 3 RRVs. During the period from 1 November 2006 to 28 February 2009, a total of 7 134 inspections/visits were conducted and support was given to 4 066 emergency calls.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION****SB146**

Question Serial No.

1291

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):Programme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire ServicesDirector of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: As the calls and demands for ambulance service have been increasing year by year, did the Administration review the current manpower shortage rate when considering the creation of posts? What is the number of newly created posts and their breakdown by rank? Can the Department fully cope with the needs of the coming year with additional manpower?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: To cope with the changes in service demand, the Administration will consider stepping up public education to encourage the appropriate use of emergency ambulance service, implementing appropriate management measures to make best use of existing resources and enhance operational efficiency, and increasing the provision of manpower for the ambulance service as needed. The main objective of the above measures is to enable the Fire Services Department (FSD) to achieve its performance pledge on response time, i.e. to handle 92.5% of emergency calls within 12 minutes. The response time performance of the ambulance service in 2006, 2007 and 2008 was 92.7%, 92.8% and 92.2% respectively.

To meet service demand, FSD will create 123 posts under the programme of Ambulance Service in 2009-10. A breakdown of these posts by rank is as follows:

Rank	Number
Senior Ambulance Officer	1
Ambulance Officer	1
Senior Ambulanceman	40
Ambulanceman	80
Assistant Clerical Officer	1
Total	123

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNGPost Title Director of Fire ServicesDate 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB147

Question Serial No.

1292

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: Why did the number of "emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage" in 2008 increase by almost 25% as compared with 2007? Which fire stations have had a relatively higher rate of emergency move-ups? Has the Department probed into ways to minimise such occurrence?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: Emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage refer to the arrangement when all major fire appliances in a fire station have been turned out for emergency services, the Fire Services Communication Centre will immediately re-deploy fire appliances from other fire stations to that station to ensure fire appliances are available on stand-by and ready for handling emergency calls in all districts at all times.

The number of emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage of the Fire Services Department (FSD) in 2008 was 43 741, an increase of about 25% as compared with 35 135 in 2007. This was mainly due to the inclement weather conditions in certain months in 2008. During June and July 2008, the number of false alarms and the number of calls from persons shut in lift increased as a result of prolonged and frequent thunderstorms and lightning, thereby increasing the number of cases where the Department needed to redeploy temporarily fire appliances of other fire stations to stand by for the handling of emergency calls.

Amongst the various districts, there were more frequent emergency calls in Mong Kok, Po Lam, Wong Tai Sin, Tai Po, Yuen Long, Wan Chai and Central. Thus, the chance of move-ups of fire appliances from their nearby fire stations would be greater. FSD is of the view that emergency move-ups of fire appliances to provide operational coverage is an essential deployment arrangement in its daily operation and the Department will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB148

Question Serial No.

1293

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: What is the Department's work plan in enhancing live-fire training for frontline fire personnel in 2009? What are the inadequacies or areas that are not keeping with the times in the current training programmes? Is there any additional resources put to this end?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) is currently providing live-fire training at its facilities at the Fire Services Training School in Pat Heung and the West Kowloon Rescue Training Centre. To strengthen the fire-fighting and rescue capabilities of frontline fire personnel, FSD provides basic live-fire training for new recruits as well as regular refresher courses for all existing frontline fire personnel.

As fire personnel are faced with increasingly complex emergency scenarios nowadays, there is a need for them to be trained under various simulated fire settings so as to enhance their fire fighting and rescue capabilities. FSD will continue to review the existing training facilities and examine the feasibility of redeveloping the Fire Services Training School in the light of the training needs of frontline fire personnel.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB149

Question Serial No.

1294

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: What are the details and timetable for the switch-over to the new breathing apparatus in 2009? Will the replacement be conducted on a one-off basis or by batch within one year? What will be the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Kong-wah

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) has procured 1 540 sets of breathing apparatus (BA) to replace all existing BA sets and their accessories in one go in 2009. The total expenditure involved is about \$45.7 million, while the estimated expenditure in 2009-10 is about \$2.3 million, which will be used for the procurement of accessories.

FSD's time table for replacement of BA is as follows:

March 2009	Delivery of the new BA sets and their related equipment (including BA testing and repairing equipment);
April 2009	The supplier will provide training on the use and repair of the BA sets and their related equipment to about 60 FSD staff, who will then become trainers for the remaining 6 000 fire personnel of the Department. FSD expects that all internal training on the use of the new BA sets will be completed before the end of 2009;
September 2009	Delivery of BA accessories;
End of 2009	Commissioning of the new BA sets.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB150

Question Serial No.

0239

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: The Administration has been exploring the introduction of a Medical Priority Dispatch System in Hong Kong for years. In this connection, will the Administration advise :

- a. What is the latest progress? Please state in detail.
- b. In the exploration process, has the Department consulted the staff unions and staff concerned regularly? and
- c. No conclusion has been drawn after years of exploring the System. Will the Department consider the System not applicable to the ambulance service in Hong Kong? Will the Administration consider abandoning the exploration of the System? If not, when is a conclusion expected to be available?

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

- Reply:
- (a) & (c) The Fire Services Department (FSD) has commissioned a consultancy to examine the feasibility of introducing a Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) in Hong Kong and to analyse the implications of various response time options. The Security Bureau and FSD will consult the Legislative Council and the public on the specific proposals and details of the MPDS within 2009.
 - (b) FSD has been collecting the views of the unions and staff on the implementation of the MPDS through the regular meetings with the unions and the internal staff forums/briefings. Moreover, representatives from various unions of FSD are members of the Steering Committee on Medical Priority Dispatch System.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

SB151

Question Serial No.

0240

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):Programme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire ServicesDirector of Bureau: Secretary for SecurityQuestion: There will be a creation of 123 permanent posts in 2009-10 for meeting the operational needs of ambulance service. In this connection, would the Administration:

Provide a breakdown of these 123 new permanent posts by rank, function and region.

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-yingReply: In 2009-10, the Fire Services Department (FSD) plans to create 123 posts under the programme of Ambulance Service. The details are as follows:

Rank	No. of Posts for Creation/ Deletion	Function(s)	Division(s)/ Region(s) to which the created posts belong
Senior Ambulanceman	40	To man 20 additional ambulance shifts to cope with the demand for emergency ambulance service.	The created posts do not belong to any specific division or region. Upon completion of their induction training, the new recruits will be flexibly deployed to operational units with greater service need, taking into account the demand for ambulance service.
Ambulanceman	<u>80</u> 120		
Senior Ambulance Officer	1	The new posts will be deployed to the Lai Chi Kok Ambulance Depot, which will be commissioned in November 2009. The Senior Ambulance Officer will be the depot commander and responsible for the overall management and command of the depot. The Ambulance Officer will be responsible for assisting the commander in handling matters relating to operation, training and administration at the depot. The Assistant Clerical Officer will be responsible for the clerical work of the depot.	The Lai Chi Kok Ambulance Depot under FSD's Ambulance Command
Ambulance Officer	1		
Assistant Clerical Officer	<u>1</u> 3		
Total :	123		

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNGPost Title Director of Fire ServicesDate 19.3.2009

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

SB152

Question Serial No.

0241

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):Programme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire ServicesDirector of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: There will be a creation of 123 permanent posts in 2009-10 for meeting the operational needs of ambulance service. In this connection, would the Administration:

Provide a breakdown of the number of vacancies filled and the total expenditure involved in 2008-09 by rank, function and region.

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply: In 2008-09, the Fire Services Department (FSD) recruited 155 new staff to fill the vacancies under the programme of Ambulance Service. The details are as follows:

Rank	Function(s)	Region(s)	No. of Recruits	Expenditure in 2008-09 (Remarks)
Ambulance Officer	Carry out frontline operation, and assist the Senior Ambulance Officer in managing the ambulance depot in respect of operation, training and service quality assurance, etc.	The 11 newly recruited Ambulance Officers will report for duty on 30 March 2009 and begin a six-month induction training. When they complete their induction training, FSD will deploy them to different ambulance divisions in accordance with the service need.	11	About \$20,000
Ambulanceman	Provide emergency ambulance service	In 2008-09, 83 Ambulancemen were recruited for induction training. Of them, only 81 completed the training and were deployed to different ambulance divisions. Of the remaining 61 recruits, 39 are undergoing their induction training, while the remaining 22 will report for duty on 30 March 2009. When they complete their induction training, FSD will flexibly deploy them to different ambulance divisions, taking into account the demand for ambulance service.	144	About \$15.44 million
Total			155	About \$15.46 million

Remarks: The above expenditure was calculated from the date of appointment of the recruits to 31 March 2009.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNGPost Title Director of Fire ServicesDate 19.3.2009

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

SB153

Question Serial No.

0242

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):Programme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire ServicesDirector of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: There will be a creation of 123 permanent posts in 2009-10 for meeting the operational needs of ambulance service. In this connection, would the Administration:

Provide a breakdown of the establishment and strength of all ranks of the ambulance stream in the Fire Services Department in 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Asked by: Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply: The permanent establishment and strength of the Ambulance Officer and Ambulanceman grades in the Fire Services Department in 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 are as follows:

Grade	Rank	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09	
		Establishment	Strength	Establishment	Strength	Establishment	Strength
Ambulance Officer	Chief Ambulance Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Deputy Chief Ambulance Officer	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	2	2	3	3	3	3
	Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer	3	3	6	3	5	5
	Superintendent (Ambulance)	10	10	9	9	10	10
	Senior Ambulance Officer	38	38	42	43	43	42
	Ambulance Officer	69	62	69	69	69	60
Ambulanceman	Principal Ambulanceman	249	228	249	228	249	241
	Senior Ambulanceman	553	563	567	570	577	526
	Ambulanceman	1 436	1 410	1 452	1 389	1 472	1 481
Total :		2 362	2 318	2 399	2 316	2 430	2 370

Note: The figures for 2006-07 and 2007-08 were as at 31 March of the respective financial years, whereas those for 2008-09 were as at 1 January 2009.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNGPost Title Director of Fire ServicesDate 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB154

Question Serial No.

2535

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Fire Protection and Prevention

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: What was the number of loan applications for fire safety improvement works under the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme in 2008-09? What was the number of successful applications and what was the loan amount involved? What is the expected number of applications for 2009-10? In what ways has the Fire Services Department been publicizing and promoting the Scheme?

Asked by: Hon. NG Margaret

Reply: From April 2008 to February 2009, a total of 52 loan applications related to fire safety improvement works were received under the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme, which is coordinated by the Buildings Department. Of these applications, 36 have been approved with a total amount of about \$1.32 million. Among the remaining 16 applications received, 14 of them are being processed, one has been withdrawn and one was rejected as the specifications of the smoke stop door proposed to be replaced failed to comply with the required standard.

As the application for the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme is voluntary and the number of loan applications depends on the desire and need of individual owners, it is difficult to project the number of applications in 2009-10 at this stage.

Since the implementation of the Loan Scheme, whenever the Fire Services Department (FSD) attends talks to explain the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance and the related fire safety directions, the Department has always taken the opportunity to publicise and promote the Comprehensive Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme to participants, including owners, occupiers and incorporated owners. When FSD issues the fire safety directions under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, it will also distribute information on the application of the Loan Scheme to the recipients at the same time.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title _____ Director of Fire Services

Date _____ 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB155

Question Serial No.

2536

Head: 45 Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: What is the estimated provision for the switch-over to the new breathing apparatus for fire personnel in 2009-10? When will the switch-over to the new breathing apparatus for all frontline fire personnel be completed?

Asked by: Hon. NG Margaret

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) has procured 1 540 sets of breathing apparatus (BA) to replace all existing BA sets and their accessories in 2009. The total expenditure involved is about \$45.7 million, while the estimated expenditure in 2009-10 is about \$2.3 million, which will be used for the procurement of accessories.

FSD's time table for replacement of BA is as follows:

March 2009	Delivery of the new BA sets and their related equipment (including BA testing and repairing equipment);
April 2009	The supplier will provide training on the use and repair of the BA sets and their related equipment to about 60 FSD staff, who will then become trainers for the remaining 6 000 fire personnel of the Department. FSD expects that all internal training on the use of the new BA sets will be completed before the end of 2009;
September 2009	Delivery of BA accessories;
End of 2009	Commissioning of the new BA sets.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title Director of Fire Services

Date 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB156

Question Serial No.

2537

Head: 45 Fire Services Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Fire Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: What is the estimated provision for the replacement of the existing radio communications system for staff in 2009-10? When will the replacement with the new radio communications system for all frontline fire personnel be completed?

Asked by: Hon. NG Margaret

Reply: The Fire Services Department (FSD) is planning to replace the existing analogue radio communications system with a new digital system. Upon commissioning, the new system will be available for use by all staff, including frontline fire personnel. We estimate that the total non-recurrent cost of the replacement system will be about \$178.3 million. FSD will seek funding approval from the Finance Committee (FC) this year. Subject to the FC's approval, the new system is expected to be commissioned by July 2011.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNG

Post Title Director of Fire Services

Date 19.3.2009

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

SB157

Question Serial No.

2538

Head: 45 Fire Services DepartmentSubhead (No. & title):Programme: (3) Ambulance ServiceControlling Officer: Director of Fire ServicesDirector of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: Please use the following table to provide the number of ambulances in the Fire Services Department (FSD) according to different age brackets. What is FSD's estimated provision for the replacement of aged ambulances in 2009-10? What is the overall plan for the replacement of ageing ambulance ?

Ambulance Age	Number of Ambulances
Under 5 years	
5 to 10 years	
10 to 15 years	
15 to 20 years	
Over 20 years	

Asked by: Hon. NG Margaret

Reply: As at 28 February 2009, the age and number of ambulances in the Fire Services Department (FSD) are as follows:

Ambulance Age	Number of Ambulances Available for Deployment
Under 5 years	67
5 to 10 years	66
11 to 15 years	108(Note)
15 to 20 years	Nil
Over 20 years	Nil

Note: 73 of the ambulances are 11 years old, and the remaining 35 are 12 years old. FSD does not have any ambulances over 12 years old.

FSD has earmarked a total of \$145 million in 2009-10 for the procurement of 185 ambulances, including 161 replacement town ambulances, three replacement village ambulances, and 21 additional town ambulances.

After all 161 town ambulances mentioned above have been delivered by batches in 2009 and 2010, the age of FSD's ambulance fleet will be reduced from the current average of around 8 years to 1.7 years.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LO CHUN HUNGPost Title Director of Fire ServicesDate 19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB158

Question Serial No.

2475

Head: 45 Fire Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Ambulance Service

Controlling Officer: Director of Fire Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: The expenses for Ambulance Service in 2009-10 will reach \$1.1 billion. Will the Administration advise:

- (a) In addition to the procurement of ambulances to replace the existing ambulances, will the Administration procure additional new ambulances to expand the existing fleet? If the reply is in the affirmative, how many additional ambulances will be procured and what will be the expenses involved?
- (b) According to the figures, the average calls per ambulance have increased each year, whereas the percentage of emergency calls that were handled within the target response time has dropped each year. Please advise if there are any concrete measures to ensure that the target response time of Ambulance Service will be met in the coming year? If yes, what will be the expenses involved?
- (c) What measures are included in the Rapid Response Vehicle Scheme? What is the amount of expenses involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

- Reply:
- (a) In addition to the replacement of existing ambulances, the Fire Services Department (FSD) has earmarked about \$33.6 million in 2009-10 for the procurement of 21 additional town ambulances to expand the existing ambulance fleet.
 - (b) The performance pledge of the emergency ambulance service of FSD is to handle 92.5% of emergency ambulance calls within a target response time of 12 minutes. The response time performance of the ambulance service in 2006, 2007 and 2008 was 92.7%, 92.8% and 92.2% respectively. In 2009-10, FSD has earmarked about \$15.8 million for the creation of 122 posts in the ambulance stream. In addition, FSD will step up public education to encourage the appropriate use of emergency ambulance service and implement management measures to make the best use of existing resources and enhance operational efficiency.
 - (c) FSD launched the Rapid Response Vehicle (RRV) Scheme in November 2006. Each RRV is manned by an Ambulance Officer. The main function of the Scheme is to provide support to frontline ambulance personnel. The Ambulance Officer manning the RRV will also perform service quality assurance duties to enhance frontline management and operation efficiency. FSD has a total of 3 RRVs at present. The annual expenditure for this Scheme is about \$1.4 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **LO CHUN HUNG**

Post Title _____ **Director of Fire Services**

Date _____ **19.3.2009**