

Statement of FSD on proposed public procession by Hong Kong Fire Services Department Staffs General Association on May 1

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In response to media enquiries on the proposed public procession by the Hong Kong Fire Services Department Staffs General Association (Staffs General Association) on May 1, a Fire Services Department spokesman made the following response today (April 13):

The Fire Services Department (FSD) has over the years been maintaining close communication with the Staffs General Association on the issue of reduction of conditioned working hours for the Fire Stream with a view to reducing their conditioned working hours gradually having regard to the three prerequisites of "cost-neutral", "no additional manpower", and "maintaining the same level of service to the public".

In a bid to meet the wishes of the Staffs General Association in some way, the FSD has in mid-March introduced a proposal to reduce the conditioned working hours of all members of the Fire Stream to 51 hours per week. In this matter the Department has consulted all members of the Fire Stream including fire officers, firemen, staff of the Communication and Mobilising Centre and their staff unions by means of a questionnaire on March 23 to collect their views on the said proposal.

The questionnaires collected during the period from April 2 to 11 were delivered to the Headquarters of FSD for handling by an independent Questionnaires Handling Team. As of today, the collection and counting of the questionnaires and related data input have been initially completed. The Questionnaires Handling Team is verifying the data and, from initial counting, some 4 700 completed questionnaires have been received, representing some 74 per cent of all questionnaires issued.

The Questionnaires Handling Team and an Opinion Survey Management Committee, both composed of independent civilian staff, are presently reviewing the data and verifying their accuracy. Upon completion of such work, the Opinion Survey Management Committee will commence with a detailed analysis of the data. It is expected that the results of the opinion survey would be available by mid-May at the earliest since the questionnaires handling work turned out to be more complicated than originally expected.

The FSD hopes that the Staffs General Association would wait patiently for the results of the opinion survey before deciding on any further actions. The Department also appeals to the Association for restraint and maintaining a continuous dialogue with the management, adding that the Association should express its opinion reasonably and lawfully without adversely affecting public service, public interest and safety.

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