

## 2013 Year-end Review of the Fire Services Department

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Following is the speech by the Director of Fire Services, Mr. CHAN Chor-kam, at the Department's 2013 Year-end Review today (1 February, 2014): -

As we step into the Year of the Horse, let me start by wishing you all a year of good health and vibrant energy. The year 2013 marked the 145th anniversary of the establishment of the Fire Services Department. It also witnessed the Department upholding its fine tradition of dedicating towards the mission to protect citizens from fire and other calamities. In the past year, the concerted effort and dedication of all in the Department helped it achieve pleasing results in various areas of its work including fire-fighting, rescue, ambulance services and fire protection. On the whole, the Department delivered effective results on various aspects of its work. I am going to review the work and services of the Department in 2013 and will take this opportunity to explain our major initiatives in the future.

### **Fire-fighting and Rescue Services (Video)**

In 2013, there were a total of 36,773 fire calls, representing a decrease of 2.3% (865 cases) as against 2012; the number of No. 3 or above alarm fires was 11, which was lower than that of 2012 (13 cases).

Last year, 93.6% of building fire calls were handled within the graded response time, which was about 1.1% higher than our performance pledge of 92.5%.

In 2013, 12 persons lost their lives in fire incidents, among them, 4 died while burning charcoal. Besides, 369 were injured while 6,919 rescued in fire incidents. One of the serious cases was a No. 3 alarm fire taking place at the Continental Mansion, North Point on the morning of 29 December. The mentioned building was under renovation at that time and the scaffolding on its external wall was severely burnt in the fire. Heavy smoke spread to the guesthouse and the residential units via corridors, doors and windows, injuring 25, with 7 critical cases.

Last year, a total of 31,115 special service calls were received, representing an increase of 3.1% (924 cases) as against 2012. In one noteworthy incident of a suspected collision of a jet boat with an unknown object off Hei Ling Chau on the way to Macau in the early hours on 29 November, 85 were injured in the incident.

In 2013, first responders turned out to a total of 42,047 cases and assisted 30,625 patients/casualties. Among them, 26 who had appeared to have no breath or pulse were resuscitated.

## **Fire Protection (Video)**

The Department continued to further strengthen its work in promoting fire protection to meet increasing public expectation on fire safety.

We conducted a total of 290,094 inspections in 2013, representing an increase of 4.8% (13,294 inspections) as against 276,800 inspections in 2012. The inspections were conducted to ensure fire safety in relation to fire service installations (FSIs), means of escape, ventilation systems, dangerous goods licensed premises, etc. A total of 43,205 inspections of licensed premises were carried out with 1,214 “Fire Hazard Abatement Notices” (FHANs) issued and 104 prosecutions instituted.

There has been public concern about the repair and maintenance of FSIs. In 2013, we conducted a total of 160,282 inspections on such installations, issued 2,313 FHANs and instituted 9 prosecutions.

From 2008 to 31 December 2013, a total of 4,006 Building Fire Safety Envoys were trained by the Department to monitor the fire safety of 2,234 buildings. Participants of the scheme included property management staff, members of owners’ corporation or management committee members and owners and occupants of buildings. Upon completion of the training, Building Fire Safety Envoys can help disseminate fire safety messages, organise fire drills, report fire hazards in their buildings and ensure that the FSIs of their buildings are properly checked every year.

Last year, we continued to organise various promotional and educational activities on fire prevention to heighten public awareness, including the TV show on the 2013 Fire Prevention Campaign, a weekly 30-minute radio programme in Happy Daily and a variety show named “Happy Daily Special - Fire Services Mid Summer Carnival”. We also launched the Fire Safety Education in Kindergartens Programme in kindergartens across the territory and organised an inter-school fire prevention short drama competition for secondary school students cum singing competition for kindergarten students. Apart from the publicity for fire prevention, it was hoped that the students would share their fire safety knowledge with their families and friends.

## **Ambulance Services (Video)**

In 2013, there were a total of 720,179 ambulance calls (1,973 calls on average per day), registering a decrease of 1% (7,121 calls) as against 727,300 calls in 2012. 675,424 of these calls were emergency calls, representing a decrease of 1.2% as compared to 683,921 calls in 2012.

Ambulance personnel arrived at the scene within the target response time of 12 minutes in 94.4% of all emergency calls in 2013, which was 1.9% higher than our performance pledge of 92.5%.

The Department continued to conduct ambulance service-related publicity work in communities and schools. We organised roving exhibitions by deploying the Ambulance Service Publicity Vehicle to various districts to educate members of the public and schoolchildren on the proper use of the ambulance services. We also collaborate with a TV station to produce the Ambulance Elites' Caring Show 2013 to deliver the message of proper use of ambulance resources.

The Department has launched the Heart Saver Scheme since 2006. With strong support from various sectors of the community, we have provided training on the use of public access defibrillators to staff of a number of organisations. As at the end of 2013, 7,378 persons who were qualified to use public access defibrillators were appointed as Heart Savers.

The Department has provided simple post-dispatch advice (PDA) for ambulance service callers concerning six types of injuries/sickness since 2011. The service provides patients with proper immediate treatment prior to the arrival of the ambulance crew and reduces the chance of deterioration in their condition. To further enhance the quality of the service, we are planning to procure and develop a PDA computer system with more comprehensive functions, so as to provide a wider range of PDA for ambulance service callers.

**Demonstration of Ambulance equipment - Protective Jacket for Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycle Riders ([Video](#))**

**Demonstration of Ambulance equipment – Schiller FRED easyport Semi-automated External Defibrillator ([Video](#))**

**Demonstration of Ambulance equipment – Laryngeal Mask Airway Supreme ([Video](#))**

**Demonstration of Ambulance equipment –Bayer Breeze 2 Glucometer ([Video](#))**

**Demonstration of Ambulance equipment – Aspirin ([Video](#))**

**Other Key Items in 2013 ([Video](#))**

Last year, we continued to strengthen our operational capability to cater for development of the community. Apart from introducing more advanced fire appliances and ambulances, we also planned to build new fire stations and ambulance depots. Kai Tak Fire Station was put into service last July to tie in with the commissioning of the cruise terminal at Kai Tak and the commercial and residential developments in the vicinity. The new ambulance depot at Choi Shun Street, Sheung Shui is under construction and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of next year. The Department has also planned to construct a fire station-cum-ambulance depot on the artificial island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to meet the emergency service demand upon completion of the bridge.

The construction works for the new Fire Services Training School at Pak Shing Kok, Tseung Kwan O has been progressing satisfactorily and the project is expected to be completed in October 2015. The new premises will be well-equipped to accommodate about 530 fire and ambulance trainees for residential training at the same time. As fire and ambulance personnel are required to work closely in handling emergencies, the new Training School will provide trainees with more opportunities to receive training together, thereby enhancing their ability to coordinate and respond to disasters.

Last April, FSD and the Buildings Department launched a one-year joint operation to inspect the common means of escapes (MoEs) in about 6,500 old-style domestic and composite buildings. The operation aimed to enhance fire safety of the common MoEs in these buildings. During the operation, FSD personnel also distributed publicity leaflets to promote the awareness of fire safety among residents. As at the end of December 2013, the Department had inspected 5,310 old-styled domestic and composite buildings, issued a total of 262 FHANs and instigated 7 direct prosecutions.

To enhance the capabilities of fire personnel in coping with intense heat and heavy smoke at fire scenes, the newly purchased firefighting training unit was put into service last December. The unit will be deployed to different Commands in turn to provide firefighting training for fire personnel (you will see the training unit at the drill yard later on).

### **Firefighting Training Unit (Video)**

Regarding the reduction in the conditioned hours of work of the operational staff in the Fire Stream, the Department launched a three-phase trial scheme last year, which will run for three years. Under the new measures, the conditioned working hours will be reduced from 54 hours to 51 hours a week. Upon completion of the trial scheme and subject to final endorsement for the Department to reduce the conditioned working hours of operational staff in the Fire Stream to 51 hours per week, the Department will study the feasibility of further reducing their weekly conditioned working hours to 48 hours.

In the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme 2013, the Department won a total of eight awards, including the gold prize of the Best Public Image Award, which has been awarded to the Department for the seventh time in a row. The Department has again won the Gold Award of the Grand Award in the Customer Service Excellence Award organised by the Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence for its professional rescue techniques and quality service. We are grateful to the public for their unfailing support and recognition of our services and will continue to strive for excellence with professionalism in delivering better services to the public.

### **Plans for the Year Ahead (Video)**

In respect of human resources, we have recruited a total of 385 Fire and Ambulance personnel, including 72 Station Officers, 17 Ambulance Officers, 13 Station Officers (Control), 139 Firemen and 144 Ambulancemen in 2013. We shall continue to conduct recruitment exercises to fill vacancies arising from natural wastage and the posts to be created in 2014.

In 2014, we will continue to step up our fire safety education and publicity efforts, strengthen the training of Service members and take their professional level up a notch. We will review the existing tools and equipment from time to time and will actively look for products of higher quality with a view to bringing in equipment that is more efficient, safer and of a higher standard (we shall introduce to you a series of tools and equipment later on).

### **Mini Fire Truck (Video)**

Thank you!

**Tuesday, February 11, 2014**

**End**