

Fire Services Department clarifies rumours on Internet

In response to the rumours on the Internet that the Fire Services Department (FSD) has deliberately concealed the actual number of casualties in an incident at Prince Edward MTR Station on August 31, the FSD reiterates that the information provided to the media accurately reflected the observations and records of the FSD personnel at the scene.

There was speculation amongst the netizens that the number of injuries was improperly altered as the Ambulance Incident Officer had revised the number of injured persons from 10 to seven in his operational messages. The department reiterates that the situation in the station was chaotic and the injured persons were dispersed in different locations and they moved around on the platform. Some injured persons may have been repeatedly counted at the initial headcount by the ambulance personnel. After the seven casualties had been treated, triaged and assembled to the designated location, no other person on the platform indicated the need for ambulance service. The aforementioned situations could result in a difference between the initial count and the number of injured people who need to be handled at the end.

In daily operation, when handling incidents with multiple casualties, the Ambulance Incident Officer at the scene would firstly conduct a brief headcount of casualties and report the preliminary estimation to the Fire Services Communications Centre for its prompt dispatch of additional resources and manpower in order to enhance the efficiency of the rescue operation. Therefore, in such incidents, the number of casualties initially counted would be updated from time to time and usually the number of casualties to be handled eventually is different from the initial counting. For a multiple casualties incident similar to that in Prince Edward Station, it is rather common to have the initial headcount being updated.

The department stresses that the seven casualties who needed ambulance service at the scene that night were all escorted by ambulance personnel to Lai Chi Kok MTR Station by a specially arranged train, and were conveyed by pre-arranged ambulances to Caritas Medical Centre and Princess Margaret Hospital for treatment.

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