

## **The 11<sup>th</sup> Fire Services Department Public Liaison Group**

### **Notes of the Third Meeting**

The third meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> Fire Services Department Public Liaison Group (PLG) was held at the multi-purpose hall on G/F, Fire Services Headquarters Building on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2005 at 6:00p.m.

#### **Opening Remarks**

The Department welcomed all members to the third meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> PLG, wishing all members good health and good luck during the Lunar New Year. The Department also introduced the new departmental representatives to the meeting.

#### **2. Confirmation of the Notes of the Last Meeting**

2.1 The notes of the last meeting were confirmed without amendments.

#### **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

#### **3. Activities of the PLG**

3.1 The Department reported that members were invited to attend the following activities since the last meeting:

Date	Activity
8.10.2004	2004 Hillfire Prevention Publicity Campaign Launching Ceremony (Sha Tin Park)
11.11.2004	Inter-departmental Vegetation Fire-cum-Mountain Rescue Exercise 2004 (Flying Site, Tai Tong East Borrow Area, Tai Shu Ha Road West, Yuen Long)
5.12.2004	2004-05 Fire Prevention Campaign Launching Ceremony (Kowloon Park)
12.12.2004	Ambulance Service Campaign 2004 (Shatin Town Hall Plaza)
5.1.2005	Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary President Appointment Certificate Presentation Ceremony cum Yau Tsim Mong District Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary Presidents' Association Inauguration Ceremony (Officers' Mess, 4/F, Tsim Sha Tsui Fire Station Complex)
18.2.2005	Passing Out Parade FSTS (Pat Heung Fire Services Training School)

The Third Generation Mobilizing System had not been under full commission and the Department would invite members to visit the new system in due course.

3.2 The Department informed the meeting that a PLG member had raised the following question via fax: “New equipment like “fire appliance with a piercing nozzle” was displayed during the press conference held recently. Will the Department consider arranging drill or visit activities to let PLG members have an idea about the equipment?” The Department thanked the member for his question and explained to the meeting that a drill demonstration would require special arrangements and the venue for demonstration might be quite remote. It was not easy to despatch rescue appliances for the above-mentioned purpose, because they were required to stay at their respective stations and to attend to calls at any time. However, the Department would try its best to introduce the rescue equipment to the public and the PLG members. For instance, fire and ambulance appliances and equipment would be introduced to the public through the departmental homepage. The Department had also uploaded the information on the new equipment in the year-end review onto the departmental homepage for public browsing. Moreover, the Department had introduced the above new equipment to its staff through the latest issue of “Elite”. Copies of this newsletter were put on the table for members’ reference. Drills such as the Heavy-duty Monitor/Nozzle Demonstration in last August would also be held to enable fire personnel to be familiar with the new equipment. PLG members would be invited to future appropriate demonstrations.

#### **4. New Fire Appliances and Ambulances**

4.1 The Department informed the meeting that all the 41 new ambulances had come into operation since last October. Moreover, the tender exercise for the 12 light ambulances had nearly completed and it was expected that these ambulances would come into operation in the following financial year. The mobile firefighting supporting machine LUF 60 and the jackless snorkel with a piercing nozzle had been introduced in the “Elite”.

#### **5. World Firefighters Games (WFG)**

5.1 Members were told that the Department had started a series of publicity activities. For example, the Director, together with the gold medal winners of the 8<sup>th</sup> WFG, met the media on 24 September last year and announced that the Department had successfully bid for hosting the next Games. There was public publicity of the Games through electronic media interviews. On 4 October last year, the Department held a fund-raising film show to raise fund for the Games. The PR company commissioned by the Department would also solicit sponsorship and resources for the Games. Any surpluses would be used for charity purposes, such as donation to the FSD Welfare Fund. The former Tamar site would be used as the athlete’s village. [Post-meeting note: The website of the 9<sup>th</sup> WFG is

<http://www.worldfirefightersgames2006.hk> and browsing is welcome.]

## **6. Despatching Ambulances in Order of Priority**

6.1 Members were informed that the new round of tendering exercise for commissioning consultants had completed. The Department was discussing the details of the contract with the appropriate consultant. Recently, various public opinions towards the plan had been covered in a newspaper article and this consultancy study could provide an objective analysis on whether this plan was suitable for Hong Kong. The Department would conduct wide publicity work once the plan was finalised.

## **7. Performance Pledge of the Fire Services Department**

7.1 The Department informed the meeting that a PLG member had made the following enquiry by fax: "According to a recent newspaper article, the number of calls (no matter fire or ambulance calls) has been increasing and there is sign that the Department has failed to meet the pledged performance targets. Does the Department have any data to support the above report?" The Department informed the meeting that the number of fire calls and that of ambulance calls for the whole year in 2004 were 35,092 and 574,901 respectively. Their response time performances were 94.06% and 91.08% respectively. The performance in respect of fire calls had exceeded the standard, whereas the performance in respect of ambulance calls had failed to meet the pledge of 92.5%, mainly because the demand for emergency ambulance services had increased greatly by 12.18% as against 2003.

7.2 The Department said that the following measures had been taken to improve ambulance services:

- As remarkable results had been achieved through the introduction of the staggered shift system, the Department increased the number of staggered-shift ambulances from 17 to 23 on 1<sup>st</sup> February this year to attain better result.
- Requested St. John Ambulance Brigade to deploy an ambulance each in Hong Kong and Kowloon District to provide urgent ambulance services from 7pm to 11pm.
- Monitored the response time performance of every district and deployed ambulance resources in an appropriate way to enhance efficiency and reduce the time for the ambulance to arrive at the scene.
- Studied the despatch of ambulances according to the treatment need of the casualties (i.e. priority despatching of ambulances) to achieve better utilization of resources.
- To enhance efficiency in mobilization by means of the Third Generation Mobilizing

System so as to improve the performance pledge.

- Increased new ambulance facilities to enhance service efficiency.

Ambulance facilities	Date of commission
Braemar Hill Ambulance Depot	October 2004
Penny's Bay Ambulance Depot	December 2004
Mong Kok Ambulance Depot	The end of 2005
Kwai Chung Ambulance Depot	The end of 2005
Kowloon Tong Ambulance Depot	2006

## **8. Development and Implementation of Paramedic Service**

- 8.1 Members were informed that since 28 February 2005, except the 12 ambulances of the urgent fleet, the whole ambulance fleet had already had the appropriate manpower and equipment to provide paramedic ambulance service. The day-shift fleet and the night-shift fleet had 213 and 114 ambulances respectively. Furthermore, all the 31 emergency medical assistant motorcycles had provided paramedic ambulance service. In addition to all frontline ambulance officers, among 790 Principal/Senior Ambulancemen in the establishment of ambulance supervisors, 746(i.e. 95%) had been qualified as Emergency Medical Assistant (EMA) II to ensure full implementation of paramedic ambulance service. The Department had trained some of the ambulancemen to become EMA II for replacement. Up till then, 64 ambulancemen had completed the training. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 onwards, there would be EMA IIs in all ambulances to provide service. The Department would continue to train ambulance personnel. It was expected that about 100 ambulancemen would be qualified as EMA II this year.

## **9. Making the Best Use of Community Resources to Promote Fire Protection, Calamity Prevention and Hazard Abatement**

- 9.1 Members were informed that District Fire Safety Ambassador Management Committees (DFSAMC), chaired by Divisional Commanders, would be set up in the 18 districts one by one. The "Yau Tsim Mong District Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary Presidents' Association" was officially established on 5 January this year. The Department expected that Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary Presidents' Association would be eventually established in the remaining 17 districts.

## **10. Progress of Preparation for the Fire Safety Exhibition Hall**

- 10.1 Members were informed that the exhibition hall would be developed jointly by the Department and the private developer. The Department would provide exhibits while the

developer would provide resources to build and operate the exhibition hall. However, concrete timetable and proposal were not available. The meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**11. Customer Service Contest**

11.1 The meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**12. Abuse of Ambulance Service**

12.1 Members were informed that the Department had not received any reports on abuse of ambulance service since the last meeting. The meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**13. Unwanted Alarms of Automatic Fire Alarm Systems**

13.1 The Department reported that due to the recent frequent climatic changes, particularly the relatively high humidity that occurred on several days, there were many unwanted alarms of automatic fire alarm systems. The daily fire calls in those several days surged from the normal rate of 150 to about 500.

**14. A Senior Fireman Losing His Life in Saving a Worker Who Had Fallen into a Manhole**

14.1 This item was fully reported in the last meeting and the meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**15. Disinfecting Arrangements for Ambulances and Ambulance Personnel**

15.1 This item was fully reported in the last meeting and the meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**16. Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance (Chapter 572)**

16.1 This item was fully reported in the last meeting and the meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**17. Performance Pledge of Fire Services Department**

17.1 This item was discussed in paragraph 7 and the meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**18. Equipment on Fire Appliance**

18.1 This item was fully reported in the last meeting and the meeting agreed to delete this item

from the agenda of the next meeting.

**19. Examination of Fire Service Installations inside Buildings of the Housing Department**

19.1 Members were informed that the Department regularly held meetings with the Housing Department to discuss fire safety issues in public housing. The last meeting was held in January this year. The meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**20. Fire Safety Improvement Direction**

20.1 The meeting agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

**21. The 12<sup>th</sup> Fire Services Department Public Liaison Group**

21.1 The Department informed the members that new members of the next PLG would be selected by a random draw after the meeting.

21.2 A PLG member said that some of the Fire Safety Ambassador application forms submitted by him had yet been processed. The Department would ask an officer to follow up this case.

**22 Recruitment Arrangement**

22.1 The Department stated that a PLG member had raised the following question via fax: "At the end of last year, the Civil Service Bureau announced that the Government will recruit more disciplinary staff in 2005-06 and that the Fire Services Department has been allocated 266 recruitment vacancies. What is the progress of the recruitment exercise conducted by the Department? What is the rank ratio of the personnel to be recruited?" The Department replied that it had started the open recruitment exercise for frontline personnel. The interim arrangement was to recruit 40 station officers, 167 firemen and 59 ambulancemen by phase and the eventual numbers of recruits depended on the feedback of the recruitment exercises. It was expected the first batch of new recruits could start their training in September this year. The Department added that it had recruited 59 frontline personnel, including 9 station officers, 29 firemen and 21 ambulancemen, from the waiting list in 2003. They would start their training on 6<sup>th</sup> June this year.

**Any Other Business**

**23 Equipment of the FSD**

23.1 A PLG member told the meeting that recently he had taken his friends from the USA and Canada to visit the Hong Kong Police Force and the fire personnel. His friends had high

regard of the excellent work performance of the two disciplined services but they believed that the fire appliances in Hong Kong were quite outdated. They also wanted to know whether fire services and ambulance equipment were available at the Disney Park because the Park would have a great bearing on the international fame of Hong Kong. Being thankful for the member's and his friends' questions and concern, the Department explained that as various renovation projects were underway at the Disney Park, fire appliances and ambulances had been stationed in the Penny's Bay Fire Station cum Ambulance Depot. There were presently 4 fire appliances and 1 ambulance in that Station/Depot. The Department would review the manpower demand of the Penny's Bay Fire Station cum Ambulance Depot before the commissioning of the Disney Park. Furthermore, the Department did not agree that the fire appliances in Hong Kong were outdated. Some senior fire personnel from New York, the USA, had visited the Department at an earlier time. They had high regard of the advanced equipment in the Department and they even sought the sketch of our new fireboat for reference. Despite the advanced level of its equipment, the Department would look for further advancement by taking heed of the development of equipment.

## **24 Computer Data File**

- 24.1 A PLG member suggested that the Department should set up a computer data file to store the information on places where there had been a fire and information on the patients who chronically required ambulance service. By so doing, the Department would be able to take preemptive means against recurrence of fire in the same places as well as to be prepared for answering the same patients' calls again. Public life safety would then be better safeguarded. The Department replied that the member's suggestion involved complicated computer systems and it explained that as a practice, the ambulancemen would ask the patients or their relatives on related information in order to understand the patients' medical history. On the other hand, the fire personnel in every fire station were required to keep abreast of the environment and special conditions of the buildings in their respective district through routine inspections in order to react promptly in case of fire. Moreover, operational fire personnel were also required to conduct fire prevention work like inspecting the fire service installations and fire escapes of the buildings in their respective district. Frontline fire personnel, therefore, had a good understanding of the environment of the buildings in their districts. To conclude, the Department said that it would catch up with time and would provide better services by using computer and technology. Special information of the patients and the buildings would also be sent to the Mobile Data Terminal of the rescue appliances through the Third Generation Mobilizing System so that the rescue personnel would be able to have the latest information. This system was also backed up by electronic maps.

## **25 Floor Plan**

25.1 A PLG member said that the majority of buildings, especially commercial buildings, were required to display floor plans on each floor and show the locations of emergency exits in the plans. He suggested that private/residential buildings should be required to follow this practice in the interest of the public and fire personnel. The Department thanked the member for his opinion and pointed out that in accordance with the current Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance, owners/tenants were not required to display floor plans on each floor. However, the Ordinance did require owners/tenants to provide or improve the fire service installations and equipment of the buildings. The Department reiterated that the public should always pay attention to the maintenance and repair of the buildings and the fire service installations and to keep fire escapes free from obstruction. Moreover, the Buildings Department had uploaded the floor plans of many high-rise buildings onto its computer systems. When necessary, the Fire Services Communication Centre (FSCC) could obtain floor plans through the above systems. Furthermore, floor plans of most buildings were kept by the New Projects Division of the FSD but it was quite time-consuming to retrieve these plans because it needed to be done by hand. In future, the FSCC would transmit the required information to the frontline staff through the Mobile Data Terminal. In fact, the settings of buildings were normally not too complicated. So, when the fire personnel were tackling fire of smaller scale, it was not a must for them to seek the floor plan of the building. They could usually put out the fire within 10 minutes after arrival.

## **26 Home-use Fire Extinguisher**

26.1 A PLG member asked that among various brands of fire extinguishers in the market, which one was most suitable for home use. The Department replied that generally, the water-type fire extinguishers were suitable for putting out wood/paper/fabric fire of small scale. Gas fire extinguishers were suitable for putting out electric fire as carbon dioxide was usually stored in such extinguishers. Powder-form fire extinguishers were suitable for putting out electric fire and fuel fire but more clean-up work might be required after use.

27. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25p.m.

Fire Services Department

April 2005