

The 19th Fire Services Department Public Liaison Group
Notes of the First Meeting

The first meeting of the 19th Fire Services Department Public Liaison Group (PLG) was held at the Multi-Purpose Hall, G/F., Fire Services Headquarters Building on 6th August 2012 at 6:30 p.m..

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Opening Remarks

The Department welcomed all members to the first meeting of the 19th Fire Services Department (FSD) Public Liaison Group (PLG) and introduced each departmental representative in attendance.

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 Meeting

3. Activities of PLG

3.1 The Department said that FSD had invited PLG members to attend the following activities in the past few months:

- Launching ceremony of a weekly radio programme on RTHK (26 May 2012)
- Fire-Burglary-Typhoon Prevention Safety Carnival for Fishermen in Fishing Moratorium (27 May 2012)
- 159th Passing-out parade (18 June 2012)
- Do Not Misuse Ambulance Service Roving Exhibition (30 June 2012)

3.2 A PLG member suggested FSD invite members to drills. The Department said that the Department had been inviting members to drills, e.g. inter-departmental drills for hill fires and mountain rescues.

4. Performance Pledges of FSD

4.1 The Department mentioned that in 2011, FSD responded to an average of 93.42% of fire incidents within the graded response time, while the response time performance of ambulance service was 93.53%. In 2011, a total of 690 114 ambulance calls were received, representing a slight increase of 0.4% when compared with the 687 133 calls in 2010. From January to July 2012, a total of 434 277 ambulance calls were received, i.e. 2 039 calls per day on average, representing an increase of 7.1% when compared with the 405 396 calls in the same period of 2011.

5. Publicity Activities of FSD

5.1 The Department told members that as at the end of June, the number of visitors to the Fire Safety Education Bus had reached 29 089 and the Department had received a tremendous amount of booking requests. The Bus would continue to visit schools, housing estates and community halls, etc. in various districts to conduct fire protection publicity and education. Regarding fire prevention publicity on radio, FSD would continue to collaborate with RTHK Radio 1 to produce a 30-minute show in the radio programme *Happy Daily*. The show would be broadcast every Friday from 11:30 am to 12 noon, and the programme archive would be available on the RTHK website.

6. Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Ambulances

6.1 The Department said that during the period from 5 January 2009 to 25 July 2012, a total of 288 new ambulances had been put into service, including 235 replacement ambulances, 2 cross country ambulances and 51 additional ambulances. These additional ambulances would be deployed to deal with the ever-increasing ambulance calls. Moreover, FSD would also replace 25 town ambulances and purchase an additional 16 by the end of 2012 for providing additional ambulance shifts, as well as maintenance and logistic support.

7. Fire Protection and Ambulance Services Promotion

7.1 The Department said that according to the first-quarter results of the 2012 TV Programme Appreciation Index Survey, *Elite Brigade II* got the highest appreciation index in that quarter of 2012. The show had also mustered an

extremely high hit rate on the RTHK's website, with over 2 million (2,086,959) views of the episodes online in March 2012. *Elite Brigade* and *Elite Brigade II* will be re-aired every Sunday at 9 pm on Channel 12 and 212 of Cable TV during the period from 3 June to 26 August 2012.

- 7.2 A PLG member opined that the *Elite Brigade* drama series fell short of clearly depicting the circumstances under which the public should call for an ambulance, thus failing to get the message of "do not misuse ambulance service" across to the audience. The Department replied that whenever the Department engaged TV stations to produce kick-off ceremonies or promotional activities, situational dramas would be included in the programme line-up to clearly promote to the public the message of "do not misuse ambulance service". The Department said that the Department also promoted the message to schoolchildren when conducting outreach programmes at local schools in a bid to educate them while they were young and get the message across to their families.
- 7.3 The Department continued to inform the members that the Department had completed the production of a new series of API on "the Proper Ways to Escape from a Fire", including a video clip and a sound recording. Arrangements had been made to broadcast the video on all TV channels to educate the public about the need to take their keys, cell phones and towels when escaping from a fire. The Department also presented the video clip to all members at the meeting.
- 7.4 The Department told the members that the Department was collaborating with the Housing Authority to promote fire safety using the Fire Safety Education Bus and the Mobile Publicity Unit. The staff on duty would provide residents with instructions on how to escape from a fire and use the hose reel correctly to put out small fires.
- 7.5 The Department said that the kick-off ceremony of Fire Prevention Campaign 2012 would be broadcast on TVB Jade and HD Jade on 20 October 2012 from 9:30 pm to 10:30 pm. The video recording of the ceremony would be conducted from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm on Tuesday, 16 October at Studio 1 of TVB City. The Department would invite all PLG members to the ceremony and the tea reception in due course.

8. Future Developments of FSD

- 8.1 The Department told members that FSD had consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Security on 4 July regarding the construction of a new ambulance depot on Choi Shun Street, Sheung Shui. There had been no objection from the Panel and it was estimated that once the funding was successfully granted, the construction would commence in February 2013 and complete in January 2015.
- 8.2 The Department said that the construction of the new Aberdeen Fire Station cum Ambulance Depot was expected to complete in September this year and the new building would be put into service once the relocation process was complete.
- 8.3 The Department also said that to cope with the demand arising from the commissioning of the first berth of the cruise terminal at Kai Tak in mid-2013 and the commercial and residential developments in the vicinity, FSD was constructing a fire station with 4-bay appliance room and ambulance facility on Cheung Yip Street, Kowloon Bay to provide essential emergency services to the district. The construction was expected to complete in mid-2013.

9. Medical Priority Dispatch System

- 9.1 The Department said that FSD had been providing simple post-dispatch advice to callers since 1 May last year for three types of cases, namely bleeding, fracture or dislocation of limbs and burn. From 1 June 2012 onwards, FSD also provided post-dispatch advice for cases of convulsions and heat exposure. As at 30 June 2012, Fire Services Communications Centre (FSCC) operators had provided post-dispatch advice for 4 011 cases, including 3 412 bleeding cases, 373 fracture and dislocation of limbs cases, 126 burn cases, 81 convulsion cases and 19 heat stroke cases.
- 9.2 The Department also said that from 1 May 2011 to end of June 2012, FSD had conducted a telephone survey of callers who had received post-dispatch advice. Among the 1 533 respondents, 98.6% were satisfied with the post-dispatch advice they received; 98.3% agreed that the advice was useful in handling the patients; and 99.2% agreed that the Department should continue to provide post-dispatch advice in the future. The results of this survey showed that the majority of people who had received post-dispatch advice were satisfied with the service and concurred that FSD should continue to provide this type of service in

the future. Thus, FSD was going to develop a computer system to facilitate the provision of more comprehensive and suitable post-dispatch advice to callers of emergency ambulance service.

- 9.3 A PLG member suggested that when conducting the above survey, instead of interviewing only the callers who had received the advice, FSD should also interview the ambulance personnel deployed to the scene to confirm that the callers had followed the advice accordingly. The Department appreciated the suggestion and said that it would ask the Ambulance Command to consider it.

10. Equipment of Fire Personnel

- 10.1 The Department briefed the members about the “Rescue Breathing Apparatus” and they agreed to delete this item.

11. Digital Communications System

- 11.1 Members agreed to delete this item.

12. Matters concerning the Handling of Complaints by FSD

- 12.1 Members agreed to delete this item.

13. Paramedic Equipment Conveyance Vehicle

- 13.1 Members agreed to delete this item.

14. Reduction in Conditioned Working Hours of Fire Personnel

- 14.1 The Department said that the civil service did not have a standard number of conditioned working hours across the board. As the conditioned working hours of civil servants were a part of their overall remuneration packages, reduction in the number of conditioned working hours for a particular grade while maintaining the same pay scale would, in effect, be an improvement of the pay and conditions of service for that grade. As a result, any proposals to reduce the conditioned working hours had to meet the three pre-requisites proposed by the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS), namely being cost neutral, not involving additional manpower

and maintaining the same level of service to the public. The Department would continue to negotiate with relevant trade unions and members to achieve a consensus regarding this matter.

15. Matters concerning Tunnel Rescue

15.1 Members agreed to delete this item.

16. Daya Bay Contingency Plan

16.1 Members agreed to delete this item.

New Items

17. New Reflective Vest

17.1 A PLG member submitted a written comment before the meeting, saying that the reflective vest should be designed to fit to the body, and its length should reach the waist only in order to avoid accidents caused by the vest being entangled by tools or vehicles passing by. However, he noticed that the new reflective vests commissioned by FSD recently were too wide and too long. He suggested modifying the design of the vest to better protect firefighting and ambulance personnel. The Department said that the recently commissioned reflective vests conformed to “BS EN471:2003 +A1:2007”, a European standard on the testing methods and specifications of high visibility warning clothing for professional purposes. The standard included stringent requirements on the areas of fluorescent and reflective surfaces of the vest. There were Velcro strips on the sides of the vest that the wearer could use to make limited adjustments to its size according to the build of the individual wearer. The Department said that it would ask relevant units for the feedback from users.

18. Fire Safety Ambassador and Estate Fire Safety Ambassador

18.1 A PLG member submitted a written enquiry prior to the meeting regarding the Fire Safety Ambassador (FSA) Scheme. He said that the FSA Scheme organised by FSD required participants to be at least 12 years old, while the lower age limit of the Estate Fire Safety Ambassador (EFSA) Scheme organised by the Housing Department was 16. He would like to know the differences

between the training programmes of these two schemes. The Department said that to promote fire safety awareness among the residents of public housing estates, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) had launched the EFSA Scheme to provide basic fire protection training to the residents and promote the message of fire safety. All those who were aged 16 or above and lived in public housing estates or HOS estates were welcome to join the Scheme. The HA would liaise with the FSD to conduct FSA training courses for applicants of the EFSA Scheme. If they completed the course and passed the examination, the HA would appoint them as EFSAs. Interested residents could call the HA's hotline on 2761 7460 for enquiries or visit their website for more information.

19. Commemorative T-shirts for PLG Members

19.1 Prior to the meeting, a PLG member submitted a written proposal suggesting the printing of a commemorative T-shirt that bore the term that the PLG member served and the logo of FSD for members of each PLG. He said that the T-shirt could serve identification purposes and help promote FSD.

19.2 Members present opined that PLG members needed to attend official activities and thus should wear formal attire, and T-shirts were deemed inappropriate. Some members suggested designing lapel pins or badge holders with neck lanyards, as these mementos served both commemorative and identification purposes and there would be no need to redesign the print for each PLG. The Department remarked that due to limited financial resources, the Department might not be able to produce several mementos at the same time. The Secretary was asked to source samples from the market for discussion by PLG members in the next meeting.

20. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.