

The 9th Fire Services Department Public Liaison Group

Notes of the Third Meeting

The third meeting of the 9th Public Liaison Group was held at the multi-purpose hall on G/F, Fire Services Headquarters Building at 6.30 p.m. on 30 December 2002.

Opening Remarks

2. A member submitted a written proposal to remind all members that since they used their own time to participate in the work and attend meetings of the Group on a voluntary basis, motions or questions on issues outside the terms of reference of the PLG should be avoided during meetings. That member also requested other members to adhere to the standing procedures by informing the parties concerned before meetings of the matter they wished to raise for discussion. Members were urged to inform the Department on matters for discussion before meetings as far as possible so that the Department could prepare the relevant materials and replies.

Confirmation of the Notes of the Last Meeting

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

Activities of the Public Liaison Group

4. Members were informed that arrangements had been made for members to attend the Ambulancemen Passing-out Parade on 25 October, the visit to Airport Fire Station and barbecue on 27 October and the visit to Shenzhen Fire Station on 29 November. Moreover, arrangements would be made for members and observers joining the visit to Fireboat Elite and Lamma Island Fire Station on 5 January 2003.

Matters Arising from Previous Meeting

5. Performance Pledge

The Department stated that the contents of the 2003 Fire Services Department Performance Pledge would be updated. Members agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

6. Establishment of Special Rescue Squads

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

7. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

7.1 Members noted that from January to November 2002, the Department had provided community CPR training and CPR refresher training for 3,548 and 614 persons respectively. At present, there were adequate ambulance personnel serving as CPR instructors. Therefore, it was not necessary to arrange for Fire Safety Ambassadors to serve as instructors. The Department indicated that from January 2002 up till now, it had not received any report on saving of lives by resuscitation by those who had received community CPR training. Currently, CPR training courses were held in Sai Wan Ho, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Tsuen Wan, Castle Peak Bay and Ma On Shan, i.e. throughout Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. As CPR certificates were of a permanent nature, trainees might apply for refresher courses according to their own needs.

7.2 A member inquired why there had been no CPR training courses held in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long and suggested that the Community Relations Division should replace Ambulance Command to hold CPR training courses so as to avoid the possibility of the Community Relations Division staff being unable to answer questions on ambulance services. The Department responded that geographical and traffic conditions as well as public needs had to be taken into account when determining the locations of the course held. When there were enough applicants in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long, the Department would consider offering CPR training courses in these two districts. The Department would optimize the utilization of resources when allocating tasks to various units.

8. Out-of-Service Arrangements for Fireboat A.G.

Members were informed that the newspapers had reported on the takeover of

Fireboat A.G. by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Fireboat A.G. would be placed in Quarry Bay Park and retired firemen would be recruited to serve as voluntary guides to provide visitors with information on the fireboat.

9. Development and Implementation of Paramedic Ambulance Service (PAS)

9.1 Members were informed that the aim of FSD was to train all Senior/ Principal Ambulancemen as Emergency Medical Assistants (EMAs) within three years. Currently, among 784 Principal/ Senior Ambulancemen in the establishment of ambulance supervisors, 438 (or 56%) of them had been qualified as EMA IIs. It was expected that about 60% of FSD ambulances could provide PAS by the end of the first quarter of 2003 and this ratio would increase to 80% and 100% by the end of the first quarter of 2004 and 2005 respectively.

9.2 In response to a member's enquiry, the Department replied that only Senior and Principal Ambulancemen received EMA II training. The Department would consider offering similar training courses for ambulancemen.

10. Fittings and Commissioning Date of Fireboat Elite

Members noted that the Fireboat Elite had been commissioned. Members agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

11. Samples of New Helmets and Protective Clothing for Ambulancemen

Members were informed that the Government Supplies Department was vetting the tenders for new helmets for ambulancemen. Members agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

12. Raising the Fire Safety Awareness of Philippina Domestic Helpers

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

13. Provision of Psychological Counselling for Front-line Staff

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

14. CD-ROMs for Publicizing Fire Safety Awareness

Members were informed that the latest API, aiming at raising fire prevention awareness of the public, had been shown on TV on 17 November. Members agreed to delete this item from the agenda of the next meeting.

15. Relation between the Design of Fire Appliances and Traffic Accidents Involving Fire Appliances

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

16. Civic Education

16.1 The Department informed the meeting that concerning the SMART TEEN activities jointly organized by the Department and the Education Department, 1,637 junior secondary students had received fire safety training. Participating schools stated that the activities helped improve students' behaviour. The Department would discuss with the Education Department on increasing the number of such activities.

16.2 The Department informed the meeting that a large scale promotional activity known as Ambulance Service Campaign was launched by the Ambulance Command at the piazza of Hong Kong Science Museum on 24 November 2002. "A Caring Heart" Computer Screen Saver Design Competition had been held to highlight the publicity campaign, and its prize presentation ceremony took place on the same day. The officiating guests included Legislative Councillor MAK Kwok-fung, Micheal and the Director, and Mr Arron KWOK was appointed as the Ambulance Ambassador during the event.

17. Importance of Smoke Lobby Doors

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

18. Traffic Accidents Involving Ambulances

The Department informed the meeting that the number of traffic accidents involving ambulances and ambulance aid motorcycles from January to

November 2002 was 96 and 18 respectively. The Department would decide whether detailed investigation should be conducted according to the circumstances of each and every case.

19. Servicing of Hydraulic Platform

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

20. Rescue Work of the Airport Command Boat

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

21. Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Department stated that it had entered the final of the Outstanding Customer Service Award held by the Civil Service Bureau, and explained the selection procedures to the meeting.

22. Visit to the Diving Unit

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

23. Commendation of Firemen

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

24. Director's Farewell Parade

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

25. New Fire Stations

The Department informed the meeting the Tai Chik Sha Fire Station and Ma Wan Fire Station were commissioned on 22 November and 27 December 2002 respectively. The construction costs and construction work of the latter were borne and taken charge by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited. The design of the fire station incorporated environmental protection concepts. Only vessels, residential coaches and emergency vehicles could gain access to the fire station.

26. Road Layout

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

27. Mobile Publicity Unit

The Department indicated a brand new mobile publicity unit had come into operation on 17 November. The Department would decide whether the number of mobile publicity unit(s) would be increased, depending on its effectiveness.

New Items

28. Planning for New Fire Stations

28.1 The Department explained to the meeting the main considerations for planning for new fire stations included town planning layout, travelling time (response time) and fire risks. Fire risks were classified into five categories from A to E, according to residential density, land development density, building height and land use, etc. Also, the Department introduced the target response time, travelling time and initial attendance of appliances set for different fire risk categories, as well as the fire station(s) under construction.

28.2 In response to a member's enquiry, the Department replied that facilities of fire stations, types of fire appliances and the equipment on board as well as water supplies for fire fighting would be adjusted according to the fire risks of different districts and the actual circumstances.

28.3 In response to a member's enquiry, the Department replied that it would review overall district planning with the Planning Department regularly, and the facilities of fire stations would be replaced to cope with development of individual districts.

28.4 Members suggested that in the course of planning for fire stations, resources and space should be reserved for long-term development, and

it was not necessary to specify the types of fire appliances required for different fire risks. The Department explained that resources for new fire stations had to be approved by the Legislative Council, and there were certain restrictions. Moreover, the Department tended to procure multi-purpose appliances to enhance cost-effectiveness.

29. Incident Involving Drunk Firemen Who Posed As Policemen

29.1 The Department indicated that there was a piece of news about firemen posing as policemen in the newspapers on 4 December 2002. The police had not yet laid any formal charge against the concerned firemen, who were allowed to bind over in their own recognizance.

29.2 In response to a member's enquiry, the Department indicated that staff suspected of breaking the law should be responsible for reporting the whole incident to the Department, or else they would be subjected to disciplinary action. The Department briefed the meeting on the Department's internal disciplinary proceedings and various kinds of punishments.

30. Code of Practice or Guidelines on Gas Leakage Incidents for Frontline Staff

30.1 The Department informed the meeting that the Department reviewed the internal administration directives and operational guidelines from time to time, making sure that the staff were adequately equipped to cope with various kinds of incidents. Before the Tsui Chuk Garden incident occurred, the Department had already embarked on the review of existing Fire Services Training Notes, and the updated version of Fire Services Training Notes on explosive gas incidents were issued to the staff on 12 December this year.

30.2 In response to a member's enquiry, the Department indicated that the responsibility of an ambulanceman was to take care of the injured and provide them with pre-hospital care; search for the injured/dead was the responsibility of the fire personnel and the police. In regard to the incident that occurred in Yuen Long in which the suspect ignited inflammable gas and caused explosion, which was quoted by a

member as an example, the Department stated that their staff constantly encountered similar hazards, and would work closely with the police in every instance to minimize operational hazards.

31. Education Centre Programme

The Department informed the meeting that the Department planned to construct a Fire Safety Education Centre in the vicinity of the Ma Wan theme park. Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited would bear the construction costs as well as take charge of the construction works. Representatives of the two sides would go on a study tour to Tokyo and Qingdao from February to March 2003.

32. Types and Price of Goods of the Welfare Section

32.1 The Department informed the meeting that a member wrote to express the wish to discuss at the meeting the goods sold by the Welfare Section. That member considered that the types and price of goods of the Welfare Section should be more in line with the market.

32.2 A member indicated that the souvenirs currently sold by the Department were not appealing. Another member suggested that with the opening of the Penny's Bay Fire Station, the Department could issue limited commemorative covers and produce cute photo frames and "dolls" for sale. The Department thanked them for their suggestions.

Any Other Business

33. New Fire Appliances and Ambulances

A member enquired about the commissioning date of the newly acquired light fire appliances, ambulances and aerial ladder platforms. The Department replied that the new light fire appliances had been deployed to Tin Shui Wai Fire Station and Pat Heung Fire Station in mid December 2002, and the new ambulances were meanwhile put on trial in various districts. The aerial ladder platforms were temporarily deployed to Driving Training School for training drivers and operators.

34. Mainland-HK Joint Fire Drill

In response to a member's enquiry, the Department indicated that a Mainland-HK joint drill was held in Shenzhen in 1994. Whether joint drills would be held in future depended on practical needs.

35. The Seventh World Firefighters Games

In response to a member's enquiry, the Department indicated that the Seventh World Firefighters Games had just come to a close, and the Hong Kong Fire Services Department scored a total of 126 medals. Hong Kong ranked fourth in the medal list, while New Zealand, Australia and France ranked first, second and third respectively. The Department was preparing to bid for the staging of the World Firefighters Games held in 2006.

36. Brochure on Fire Prevention in the Home

A member indicated that she had approached several fire stations for the brochure on fire prevention in the home, but only the 1999 version was available. She suggested that in respect of design, the Department could make reference to the brochure published by the Housing Department, such as making the brochure more appealing by providing more practical information as well as inserting cartoons. The Department encouraged members to browse the Fire Services Department web page and download various kinds of up-to-date information. That member also said that the staff of the fire stations were very courteous. [Post-meeting note: The 1999 version of the brochure on fire prevention in the home was the most updated version available. The Department had started to revise the contents of the brochure, and the revised version would be published in due course.]

37. Vote of Thanks

The Department indicated that the present Director of Fire Services would retire on 6 January 2003, and the incoming Chief Fire Officer (HQ) would serve as the Chairman of the Public Liaison Group.

38. There being no other business. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Fire Services Department

January 2003