

Bills Committee on Shenzhen Bay Port Hong Kong Port Area Bill

Emergency Rescue Arrangement

Objective

This paper provides information on the existing emergency rescue arrangement between Hong Kong and the Mainland and the future arrangements for Shenzhen Bay Bridge (“SBB”) and Shenzhen Bay Port (“SZBP”).

Maritime Search and Rescue Operations

2. An established mechanism is in place to facilitate cross boundary search and rescue (“SAR”) operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland. As far as maritime SAR operation at the Guangdong Province coastal waters is concerned, the Hong Kong Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (“HKMRCC”) maintains a direct and close working relationship and seamless coordination with the Guangdong Provincial Emergency Search and Rescue Centre (“GDRCC”). The two centres do not require clearance from higher authorities for operation contact.

3. In case it comes to the attention of the HKMRCC that an incident in the Guangdong Province coastal waters (including Shenzhen waters on the Mainland side of the Deep Bay) necessitates SAR operations, the HKMRCC will alert GDRCC of the incident. Depending on the circumstances of the incident, e.g. whether the location where the incident occurs is close to Hong Kong and whether the deployment of Hong Kong resources is considered more effective for conducting the SAR operation, HKMRCC will coordinate with GDRCC and seek their permission for Hong Kong SAR resources to enter into Mainland waters to carry out the SAR operation. Hong Kong SAR resources include SAR units of Marine Police, Fire Services Department and Government Flying Services. Cooperation and appropriate assistance will be offered by each party as the situation warrants, for the benefit of saving lives.

4. In case the SAR operations are conducted in aid of Hong Kong-Macao ferries, HKMRCC has the standing permission from GDRCC to deploy our Search and Rescue Units into the coastal waters of Guangdong.

5. Since the Shenzhen section of the SBB falls within the Guangdong Province coastal waters, any untoward incidents that necessitate the coordination between the Mainland and Hong Kong authorities in respect of maritime SAR operation at the waters under SBB will follow the well-established mechanism set out above.

Fire, Other Rescue and Emergency Relief Operation on Land

6. To ensure the safe operation of the future Hong Kong Port Area within the SZBP, a fire station with ambulance facility will be established there. A major fire appliance and an ambulance with staff will be deployed there to provide necessary round the clock emergency fire, rescue and ambulance cover. Further operational reinforcement can be immediately deployed from fire stations and ambulance depots locating in the western region of the New Territories if necessary.

7. Discussions are underway between Hong Kong and Shenzhen authorities to map out contingency arrangements for untoward incidents, e.g. fire, rescue operations and emergency relief operations at the SZBP. The two sides have agreed that relevant drills will be conducted both before and after the commencement of the SZBP to familiarise both sides with the arrangements. Besides, operational communication can be made through the existing fire control centres of both sides.

8. In case of a fire or untoward incident that necessitates rescue efforts within each party's jurisdiction at the SZBP, operation will be initiated and the other party will be alerted immediately through the control centres. If the situation warrants, assistance may be requested from either party through the control centres. The party who has

jurisdiction over the area where the incident occurs will take charge of the scene. Against the principle that highest priority be accorded to saving lives, the two sides have reached agreement in principle that both sides will initiate action immediately in case of urgent distress incidents (e.g. fire affecting the clearance area of the two sides), and may without prior notice take action to save lives even in the clearance area of the other side, i.e. “rescue action first, notification second” (“先救人，後通報”). In such cases, the other side will be alerted through the control centre at the utmost earliest time possible.

Security Bureau
8 March 2007