

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

**Number of Rescue Cases and Staff Establishment at
Public Swimming Pools**

Purpose

This note provides further information on issues raised at a meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs on 10 July 2009 concerning the number of rescue cases and lifeguard establishment at public swimming pools.

Number of rescue cases at public swimming pools

2. The 37 public swimming pool complexes managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) are provided with various types of pool facilities, including 50-metre main pools, 50-metre secondary pools, diving pools, training/teaching pools and leisure/paddling pools. The number of rescue cases that occurred at these swimming pools between 2005 and 2009 is set out in the table at Appendix 1.

Changes in the lifeguard establishment

3. The changes in the lifeguard establishment at the public swimming pools managed by LCSD between 2001 and 2009 are tabulated at Appendix 2.

4. To ensure effective use of resources, LCSD conducted a thorough review of the manpower requirements for lifeguards at its swimming pools in 2003-04. The findings included the followings –

- (1) Some lifeguard positions which were mainly responsible for maintaining the queuing order (such as those for maintaining order at the top of water slides) could be filled by non-lifeguards as life-saving skills were not required.
- (2) Upon removal of the rescue blind spots at certain swimming pools through implementation of improvement works, the lifeguard positions originally created to ensure safety at these blind spots were no longer required.

- (3) After an in-depth study and analysis of the attendance at individual swimming pools, it was found that the number of seasonal lifeguards employed in certain pools was higher than the actual requirement and hence there was room for downward adjustment.
- (4) The adoption of different practices inherited from the two former Provisional Municipal Councils had given rise to discrepancies in the provision and deployment of lifeguard manpower at swimming pools in the urban areas and the New Territories (NT). The review concluded that the deployment arrangements should be standardised for urban and NT swimming pools.

The review concluded that an optimal use of lifeguard manpower could be achieved through more rationalised, standardised and effective deployment of lifeguards at swimming pools. Upon the implementation of the above recommendations by LCSD during the swimming seasons in 2003 and 2004, the number of swimming pool lifeguards in the peak and non-peak seasons decreased by 216 and 154 respectively.

5. In response to concerns raised by a lifeguards' union about the manpower situation of swimming pool lifeguards, LCSD formed a working group in August 2004 to review the staffing arrangements. Having regard to the particular configuration and patronage level of certain swimming pools, LCSD increased the number of swimming pool lifeguards in 2005 by 27 and 32 for the peak and non-peak seasons respectively. The manpower at LCSD swimming pools for the peak and non-peak seasons was further increased by 33 and 38 lifeguards respectively during the period from 2007 to 2009.

6. We will keep the manpower provision and deployment of lifeguards at swimming pools under review to meet changing needs.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
March 2010

Number of Rescue and Drowning Incidents at Public Swimming Pools Notes (1) & (2)

Type of Pool	Year Special Incidents	2005		2006		2007		2008 <small>Note (3)</small>		2009	
		Rescue Case	Drowning Case	Rescue Case	Drowning Case	Rescue Case	Drowning Case	Rescue Case	Drowning Case	Rescue Case	Drowning Case
Main Pool		68	0	83	0	86	0	123	1	60	0
Secondary Pool		11	0	11	0	6	0	5	0	4	0
Diving Pool		21	0	14	0	16	0	28	0	17	0
Teaching Pool/ Training Pool		6	0	7	0	9	0	17	1	2	0
Leisure Pool/ Paddling Pool		5	1	6	0	6	0	13	0	10	1
Total No. of Rescue and Drowning Incidents		112		121		123		188		94	
Percentage of Incidents against Total Swimming Pool Attendance		0.0013%		0.0014%		0.0013%		0.0016%		0.0011%	

Notes:

- (1) Rescue cases refer to cases requiring rescue operation carried out by lifeguards.
- (2) The classification of drowning cases is based on the direct cause of death determined by the Forensic Pathologist
- (3) Owing to the Free Admission Scheme implemented from July to September 2008, there was a drastic increase in attendance at public swimming pools as compared with the number in 2007. The number of rescue and drowning incidents that occurred at the swimming pools was therefore higher than that in the previous years while the percentage remains at a relatively stable level.

**Lifeguard Manpower
at Public Swimming Pools between 2001 and 2009
(calculated on the basis of the total manpower
of two shifts per day)**

Peak Season Note (1)

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
								Note (5)	
Lifeguard Manpower	1304	1304	1233 <small>Note(2)</small>	1088 <small>Note (3)</small>	1115	1115	1119	1148 <small>Note (4)</small>	1148
Compared with the manpower last year (%)	-	-	-71 (-5.4%)	-145 (-11.7%)	+27 (+2.5%)	0	+4 (+0.4%)	+29 (+2.6%)	0

Non-Peak Season Note (1)

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
								Note (5)	
Lifeguard Manpower	1109	1109	988 <small>Note(2)</small>	955 <small>Note (3)</small>	987	987	991	1019 <small>Note (4)</small>	1025 <small>Note (6)</small>
Compared with the manpower last year (%)	-	-	-121 (-10.9%)	-33 (-3.3%)	+32 (+3.4%)	0	+4 (+0.4%)	+28 (+2.8%)	+6 (+0.6%)

Note:

- (1) Peak Season refers to the period from June to August every year and Non-Peak Season refers to all other months when the swimming pools are open. More seasonal lifeguards are employed to provide services during the peak season.
- (2) This denotes the number of lifeguards in 2003 after reduction, including the reduction of 5 lifeguards (from 82 to 77) each during the peak and non-peak seasons at Kowloon Park Swimming Pool and the reduction of 12 (from 78 to 66) and 6 (from 55 to 49) lifeguards during the peak and non-peak seasons respectively at Tseung Kwan O Swimming Pool.
- (3) This denotes the number of lifeguards in 2004 after reduction, including the reduction of 10 (from 77 to 67) and 12 (from 77 to 65) lifeguards during the peak and non-peak seasons respectively at Kowloon Park Swimming Pool, the reduction of 14 (from 66 to 52) lifeguards and the increase of 1 (from 49 to 50) lifeguard during the peak and non-peak seasons respectively at Tseung Kwan O Swimming Pool.

- (4) The relatively large increase of lifeguard manpower in 2008 was mainly due to the opening of the indoor Hin Tin Swimming Pool, as a result of which the number of lifeguards increased by 23 and 21 during the peak and non-peak seasons respectively.
- (5) The lifeguard manpower tabulated under the 2008 column excludes the number of additional seasonal lifeguards employed during the implementation of the Free Admission Scheme at swimming pools between July and September. For the period between July and August, 78 additional seasonal lifeguards were employed and for September, 120 were employed.
- (6) In 2009, six additional lifeguards (from 1 019 to 1 025) have been employed for the non-peak season since September.