

The No. 4 Alarm Fire at Fa Yuen Street on
30 November 2011

The first fire call

At 4:40 am on 30 November 2011, the Fire Services Communications Centre (FSCC) received an emergency call reporting that there was a fire at the hawker stalls outside Wah Mei Building at 191-197 of Fa Yuen Street. Immediately following receipt of the call, the Fire Services Department (FSD) dispatched a total of 8 fire appliances (including 4 fire appliances as standard attendance and the other 4 as additional attendance under the contingency plan for Fa Yuen Street hawker stalls) to the scene. Upon receiving more calls reporting the fire at the same location, the FSCC turned out an additional fire appliance and an ambulance as reinforcement at 4:41 am.

2. The first fire appliance arrived at the scene at 4:44 am, which met the performance pledge that building fire calls in built-up areas should be responded within 6 minutes.

Fire-fighting and search and rescue operations in buildings

3. Upon arrival at the scene, fire services staff noted that the hawker stalls in the affected section on both sides of Fa Yuen Street were well ablaze. The fire also spread to the units on the ground floor, cockloft and the first floor of the building at 192-194 of Fa Yuen Street.

4. At 4:48 am, in view of the rapid fire spread, the Incident Commander upgraded the fire to No. 3 alarm. The FSCC immediately dispatched 25 fire appliances and 3 ambulances to carry out fire-fighting and rescue operations.

5. Thereafter, more fire services resources were deployed in the light of the ground situation. Before 6:00 am, a total of 34 fire appliances and 172 fire services staff were mobilized to the scene to tackle the No. 3 alarm fire.

The deployment at that time was in fact well beyond the standard attendance for No. 4 alarm fire (i.e. 22 fire appliances and 105 fire services staff). Taking into account the fire services resources already deployed at scene, FSD upgraded the fire to No. 4 alarm at 6:09 am.

Fire extinguishment and total fire services resources deployed

6. FSD continued to deploy more fire services resources to perform firefighting and rescue operations in the light of operational needs. The fire was brought under control at 11:11 am and was largely extinguished at 12:28 pm. Altogether, more than 300 fire and ambulance services personnel (including 12 Breathing Apparatus teams and 24 Search and Rescue teams), 50 fire appliances, 23 ambulances and a Multiple Casualty Treatment Centre were deployed in the entire operation.

Casualty and Damage

7. The lives of 9 people were claimed in the fire, with 34 others injured (one injured person was a firefighter). About 300 occupants affected were moved to safe places by fire services staff and the Police. Some other occupants fled the scene on their own. A total of 23 hawker stalls on the two sides of Fa Yuen Street were destroyed in the fire. In addition, 7 shop units and 9 residential units in nearby buildings were damaged at various degrees.

Latest Position

8. FSD and the Police are investigating the cause of the fire and the reasons causing multiple injuries/fatalities in conjunction with other relevant government departments. The findings of the investigation are yet to be available.

**Security Bureau
Fire Services Department
December 2011**