

**For information**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Conditioned Hours of Work of the Operational Staff  
in the Fire Stream of the Fire Services Department**

**PURPOSE**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service (the Panel) on 19 November 2012, the Administration was requested to report to the Panel the progress of the proposed reduction of conditioned hours of work of the operational staff in the Fire Stream of the Fire Services Department (FSD) in due course. This paper provides an update for Members' reference.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Administration set out its policy governing the conditioned hours of work of the civil service vide LC Paper No. CB(1)788/11-12(03) in January 2012. The Administration further provided a paper on the same subject with specific reference to the operational staff in the Fire Stream of the FSD vide LC Paper No. CB(4)133/12-13(07) for Members' reference at the meeting on 19 November 2012. At that meeting, Members noted FSD's new proposal to reduce the conditioned hours of work of operational staff in the Fire Stream from 54 hours to 51 hours per week ("new 51 proposal") and FSD's intention to launch a trial scheme when ready.

3. In light of the views of the deputations expressed at the meeting, Members requested the Administration to continue discussion with relevant staff unions/associations on the details of the proposal, and to report progress to the Panel in due course.

## **FSD'S NEW 51 PROPOSAL AND TRIAL SCHEME**

4. As detailed in LC Paper No. CB(4)133/12-13(07), the FSD management formulated the new 51 proposal having regard to operational needs (with particular reference to service demand in recent years), the manpower situation and the views of the staff associations concerned. The proposed reduction is to be achieved mainly through process re-engineering in light of the enhanced functionalities of the fire appliances/equipment currently available, as well as the adoption of various efficiency measures taking into account the operational experience in recent years. The key features of the proposal include streamlining the manning for designated types of fire appliances/vessel, rationalising the staffing complement and resource deployment in selected areas/units and re-structuring the FSD's diving unit.

5. Subsequent to the Panel meeting in November 2012, the FSD management has further considered views of concerned staff associations and refined the implementation details of the new 51 proposal. To test the viability of the said proposal, the FSD management plans to implement a three-phased trial scheme starting from 15 March 2013. Details of the trial scheme are set out at the **Annex**.

## **WAY FORWARD**

6. During the trial, the FSD management will closely monitor the situation to ensure that the level of service provided to the public is maintained. Upon successful completion of the trial scheme and subject to the approval for FSD to reduce the conditioned hours of operational staff in the Fire Stream to 51 hours per week permanently, FSD will study the feasibility of further reducing their weekly conditioned hours to 48 hours.

7. Members are invited to note the above information.

Civil Service Bureau  
Security Bureau  
Fire Services Department  
March 2013

## **Trial Scheme of the New 51 Proposal to Reduce the Conditioned Hours of Work of Fire Stream Staff**

### **Implementation by Phases**

Adopting a prudent and incremental approach, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will conduct the trial scheme of the new 51 proposal in three phases such that the rationalisation measures and/or implementation details can be suitably reviewed and refined (if required) having regard to operational experience gained during the period –

**(a) *Phase 1 – Trial by an entire operational command***

All relevant Fire Stream staff in the Hong Kong Island, Islands and Marine Command<sup>1</sup> will take part in the first phase of the trial with a view to assessing the effect of the streamlined manning for designated types of fire appliances/vessel and other rationalisation measures (e.g. replacing a major pump with a light pumping appliance in suitable areas to enable speedier arrival at incident scene in remote rural areas) on the operational front. About 1 800 staff, or 32% of the total number of relevant Fire Stream staff in FSD, will be involved in this phase.

**(b) *Phase 2 – Trial by an entire operational command plus selected units***

Subject to the satisfactory completion of the command-based trial in Phase 1, the trial will be extended to selected units in other commands. The additional units concerned will include the South Division of the Kowloon Command, the South Division of the New Territories Command<sup>2</sup>, as well as Control Stream staff undertaking duties related to rescue control in the Airport Fire Contingent and the Mobile Command Units. With these additional units joining the trial in Phase 2, the number of staff involved will be about 2 600, or 46% of the total number of Fire Stream staff concerned.

**(c) *Phase 3 – Trial covering all operational units in the Fire Stream***

Subject to the satisfactory completion of the Phases 1 and 2, the trial will be extended to cover all operational staff in the Fire Stream, amounting to about 5 600.

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of the operational staff in the Fire Stream are serving in the three operational Fire Commands, namely (a) the Hong Kong Island, Islands & Marine Command; (b) the Kowloon Command; and (c) the New Territories Command. The conditioned hours of work for staff of the Control Stream who are deployed to undertake duties related to Fire Stream operations are also 54 hours per week.

<sup>2</sup> The South Division of the Kowloon Command covers Tsim Sha Tsui, Yau Ma Tei and Hung Hom areas. The South Division of the New Territories Command includes Kwai Chung, Tsuen Wan, Lai King, Sham Tseng and Tai Lam Chung areas.

## **Implementation timetable**

2. According to FSD's plan, Phase 1 of the trial commencing on 15 March 2013 will last a full existing roster cycle<sup>3</sup> of about 3 months before Phase 2 is launched, tentatively, on 25 June 2013. Assuming satisfactory completion of the second phase, which will also last for a full existing roster cycle, Phase 3 of the trial is tentatively scheduled to start on 5 October 2013.

3. To ensure that the level of service provided to the public is maintained, FSD will rigourously monitor and review the effectiveness of the trial on an on-going basis throughout the trial period to ensure that any teething problems are timely addressed. FSD is mindful that the respective trial phases may be extended in the light of the trial progress to the effect that the launch date of Phase 2 and/or 3 may need to be adjusted accordingly. In case significant adjustment to the trial scheme is required, or the progress or effectiveness is unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to suspend or terminate the trial scheme.

4. Due to the complexity of the trial scheme and the need to collect relevant data to evaluate the effectiveness of the trial scheme before a final report for seeking approval to reduce the conditioned working hours could be submitted, the trial scheme is expected to last for three years starting from the date when all operational units are involved in the trial scheme (i.e. third phase). Subject to the progress of the trial scheme, FSD may consider recommending to relevant Bureaux to reduce the duration of the trial scheme.

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<sup>3</sup> The existing roster cycle lasts 102 days. The new roster cycle for 51 weekly working hours provides each Fire Stream member to work 31 duty days (24 hours) and take 5 rota leaves (24 hours) in a cycle of 108 days. The current shift pattern system of "24 hours on, 48 hours off" is maintained.