

香港特別行政區政府  
保安局



The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Security Bureau

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13 July 2015

Clerk to Establishment Subcommittee  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn: Mr Jason KONG)

Dear Mr Kong,

**Legislative Council Establishment Subcommittee**  
**Follow-up to meeting on 23 June 2015**

At the meeting of the Establishment Subcommittee on 23 June 2015, Members discussed the proposed creation of a permanent post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer in the Headquarters Command of the Fire Services Department (FSD) for implementing quality assurance (QA) and training accreditation mechanisms. We set out the supplementary information on the following two issues as requested by Members.

**Objectives and indicators of the proposed QA mechanism**

With the growing number of large-scale cross-boundary and inter-district mass transit systems and infrastructures, operational divisions and fire stations under FSD are required to cooperate more strategically in their operations and

resource deployment with a view to handling emergencies efficiently and effectively. To ensure that the operational efficiency, fire service knowledge and techniques of the frontline fire personnel are maintained at a high standard, FSD proposes to establish a more professional and institutionalised QA mechanism for providing efficient, professional and high-quality emergency rescue services as well as enhancing the safety of frontline operational staff. The QA mechanism will also provide an important reference for management decisions on the planning of resources (including acquisition of equipment and deployment of manpower) to meet service needs.

As the handling of different fire incidents<sup>1</sup> and special service incidents<sup>2</sup> involves a wide range of complex firefighting and rescue operations, frontline fire personnel must be equipped with the relevant professional knowledge and techniques in order to tackle various types of incidents effectively. The proposed QA mechanism will cover various types of professional firefighting and rescue knowledge and techniques, including fire suppression, basic and technical rescue techniques and tactics, the use and operating procedures of rescue tools, breathing apparatus control procedures, incident command and control, etc. The mechanism will also cover professional rescue techniques adopted by various rescue teams (e.g. High Angle Rescue Team and Hazardous Materials Team).

Under the proposed QA mechanism, FSD will set up specialised teams to conduct inspections to fire stations, to monitor the day-to-day training programmes of different divisions and fire stations, and to carry out field inspections of the performance of frontline fire personnel in handling fires, special service incidents, and large-scale drills with a view to assessing whether their performance meets the quality standard for respective functions.

Regarding the indicators of the proposed QA mechanism, FSD's preliminary plan is that the specialised teams will conduct inspections on an annual cycle, and inspect at least one fire station in each operational division<sup>3</sup> per year. Apart from regular inspections, the specialised teams will also carry out field inspections of the performance of frontline fire personnel in handling large-scale fires, special service incidents and large-scale drills, and to evaluate the overall performance of each operational area. In addition, FSD will keep the

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<sup>1</sup> Fire incidents include high-rise building fires, tunnel fires and fuel farm fires etc.

<sup>2</sup> Special service incidents include traffic and industrial accidents, unknown gas leakages, landslides, flooding and high angle rescues.

<sup>3</sup> FSD divides Hong Kong into three operational fire commands namely the Hong Kong Command, the Kowloon Command and the New Territories Command. There are totally 14 operational divisions under the three fire commands.

QA mechanism under regular review after its implementation and consider the need for developing other indicators.

At this stage, the QA mechanism proposed by FSD will focus on various aspects of firefighting and rescue. FSD will consolidate the experience and review the effectiveness of the QA mechanism after its implementation in the operational units. FSD keeps an open mind on the feasibility of extending the QA mechanism to other areas of work in future, such as the abatement of fire hazards, the enhancement of fire safety of old buildings, or fire investigation, having regard to the experience gained from the implementation of the mechanism in the operational units.

#### Conditioned hours of work of fire personnel in Hong Kong and other regions

The conditioned hours of work of members of disciplined services are governed by their operational needs and determined in relation to the total responsibilities, its complement and the actual prevailing manpower available of each service. The current conditioned hours of work of FSD operational staff is 54 hours per week with a shift pattern of “24 hours on, 48 hours off”. When on duty, the staff has to attend to emergency calls.

Starting from October 2013, FSD has launched a full trial on reducing the conditioned hours of work to 51 hours per week, involving about 5 600 operational fire stream members across all commands in Hong Kong. The trial typically lasts for three years and during the trial period, FSD submits a progress report on the trial scheme to the policy bureaux every 6 months.

Due to the differences in social conditions, geographical environments, public administrative systems, civil service pay systems as well as the appointment terms and conditions of fire personnel, we consider it not appropriate to directly compare the conditioned hours of work of fire personnel of Hong Kong and other regions. In response to Members’ request, FSD has consulted fire brigades in other regions and tabulated the conditioned hours of work and shift patterns of operational fire personnel of Hong Kong and other regions as follows:

<b>Fire brigade</b>	<b>Conditioned hours of work</b>	<b>Shift pattern</b>
Hong Kong Fire Services	54 hours per week	A basic shift pattern of “24 hours on, 48 hours off”.

Department (Fireman / Station Officer grades) (Operational / Marine Stream)	(Reduction of conditioned hours of work to 51 is currently on trial)	During the trial period of reducing the hours of work to 51 per week, fire personnel work on 31 duty days (24 hours) and take 77 days off in each roster cycle of 108 days.
Tokyo Fire Department	About 59 hours per week	24 hours and 10 minutes* per shift.  In a roster cycle of 21 days, fire personnel work on 7 duty days (24 hours and 10 minutes) and work on 1 day for administrative duties (from 0830 hours to 1715 hours). They are off duty on the remaining 13 days.  *On duty from 0830 hours to 0840 hours of the following day on a duty day with 0000 hours to 0840 hours being a standby period. The salary of the fire personnel during the standby period is determined by the number of hours of attending incidents.)
New York City Fire Department	About 40 hours per week	A shift pattern of day and night shifts is adopted. A day shift lasts for 9 hours (from 0900 hours to 1800 hours) and a night shift lasts for 15 hours (from 1800 hours to 0900 hours of the following day).  Under the basic shift pattern, fire personnel work for two consecutive day shifts, followed by taking 48 hours off, and then work for two consecutive night shifts, followed by taking 72 hours off.
London Fire Brigade	42 hours per week	A shift pattern of day and night shifts is adopted. A day shift lasts for 10.5 hours (from 0930 hours to 2000 hours) and a night shift lasts for 13.5 hours (from 2000 hours to 0930 hours of the following day).

		Fire personnel are required to work for 2 day shifts and 2 night shifts in each roster cycle of 8 days. They are off duty on the remaining 4 days.
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for Secretary for Security

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