

**For discussion
on 21 April 1999**

EC(1999-2000)7

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 45 - FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT Subhead 001 Salaries

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the creation of the following permanent post in the Fire Services Department -

1 Chief Fire Officer
(GDS(C)2) (\$116,650 - \$123,850)

PROBLEM

The Fire Services Department (FSD) does not have adequate staffing support at senior directorate level to enable it to discharge its fire safety duties efficiently and effectively.

PROPOSAL

2. The Director of Fire Services (D of FS), with the support of the Secretary for Security, proposes to reorganise the existing Fire Protection Command (FPC) into two, namely, the Fire Safety Command (FSC) and the Licensing and Control Command (LCC), and to create a permanent post of Chief Fire Officer (CFO) (GDS(C)2) to head the new FSC.

/JUSTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

Present Organisation

3. At present, FSD comprises six Commands, namely the Headquarters Command, the three regional Fire Commands for Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories, the FPC, with each headed by a CFO, and the Ambulance Command headed by a Chief Ambulance Officer (CAO) (GDS(C)2). An organisation chart of FSD is at Enclosure 1.

Encl. 1

Pressure arising from existing areas of work

4. Assisted by two Deputy Chief Fire Officers (DCFOs) (GDS(C)1), CFO(Protection) [CFO(P)] is responsible for formulating and reviewing policies pertaining to the regulation and improvement of fire safety and overseeing the operation of the FPC. Due to the growing workload on fire prevention and protection, the establishment of FPC has increased by over 40% from 282 posts at the end of 1997 to 399 in February 1999. Apart from administration and staff supervision, CFO(P) is directly and personally involved in the key functions of the FPC, including approval of sale or supply of any type of portable fire fighting equipment, registration of the fire service installation (FSI) contractors, non-standard fire safety plans for new infrastructural projects and issue of Fire Services Certificates for new buildings and licensed premises. The overall volume of workload in these respects has been growing by about 12% annually since 1996.

D of FS considers further delegation beyond the CFO level not possible due to statutory requirements or the level of responsibilities involved.

5. As a result of the tragic fire in Garley Building and other major fire incidents in 1997, D of FS set up a Fire Safety Task Force (FSTF) under the FPC in April 1998 to implement measures to improve fire safety in commercial buildings and karaoke establishments and to enhance public awareness on fire safety. While a second DCFO (GDS(C)1) post¹ has been created in the FPC to lead the FSTF and supervise its operation, CFO(P) has to give policy and strategic guidance in the implementation of the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) (Amendment) Ordinance, including formulation of procedural instructions and implementation plans for inspection and enforcement actions, to co-ordinate with relevant bureaux and departments on the introduction of a licensing regime for karaoke establishments, to steer the development of a long term publicity strategy to promote a fire safety culture and to ensure concerted actions with other operational Commands and Government departments.

¹ Members approved the creation of the DCFO post on 20 March 1998 *vide* EC(97-98)75.

/6.

Encl. 2 6. The existing organisation chart of FPC and major areas of
Encl. 3 responsibility of the CFO and the two DCFOs are at Enclosure 2. A job
description of the existing CFO(P) is at Enclosure 3.

Pressure arising from new areas of work

Upgrading fire safety in private non-commercial buildings

7. FSD conducted a survey in February 1998 of all private buildings in the territory to ascertain the extent of the fire safety problem. The findings showed that the provision and maintenance of FSI and fire safety management conditions in 19 649 buildings or about 72% of the buildings surveyed were unsatisfactory.

8. The FPC, led by CFO(P) and with assistance from staff of the Operational Commands working overtime, is taking follow-up action on the irregularities identified during the survey, including reinstatement of FSI to their original approved standards and abatement of fire hazards found in the means of escape. In parallel, the Government has drawn up a package of proposals for improving fire safety in private buildings and consulted the public in mid 1998. The community was generally supportive of the objective to improve fire safety in private buildings and agreed that there was an urgent need to step up inspections and enforcement action. CFO(P) is tasked to formulate detailed legislative proposals to upgrade fire safety in private non-commercial buildings and to oversee their implementation. A new Building Improvement and Support Division has been set up in FPC to assist CFO(P).

Reviewing existing Fire Services Ordinance

9. CFO(P) heads a review group set up in October 1998 to review the existing Fire Services Ordinance, aimed at strengthening the legislative control over fire hazard abatement, increasing the level of penalty to enhance deterrent effect as well as updating the provisions to meet present-day requirements. Apart from being responsible for conducting the review and assisting in the subsequent legislative amendment procedures, CFO(P) will be responsible for exercising enhanced legislative powers in respect of enforcement actions against identified fire hazards. In particular, the more proactive use of physical abatement powers will increase the workload at CFO(P) level since under Section 9 of the Ordinance, D of FS is not permitted to delegate such powers and duties to an officer below the rank of CFO.

/Control

Control of Dangerous Goods

10. CFO(P) has been actively involved in the review of the Dangerous Goods Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation, in particular the classification, labelling and exempting quantities of various kinds of dangerous goods, to conform to international standards and practices. Since August 1998, he has assumed chairmanship of the Dangerous Goods Standing Committee which advises the Government on dangerous goods issues and related regulations.

11. In the wake of the cyanide spillage incident at Tai Po Road in December 1997, the Government considered it necessary to review the control measures governing the conveyance of dangerous goods. Currently, only the conveyance of dangerous goods in categories 1, 2 and 5 requires a licensed vehicle. D of FS has therefore commissioned a consultancy study on the proper conveyance of categories 3, 4 and 6 to 10 dangerous goods. Manpower of the existing Dangerous Goods Unit of the FPC has also been strengthened to step up inspection of dangerous goods vehicles. CFO(P) has to steer the review, the consultancy study and the necessary legislative amendments as an integrated approach to improve dangerous goods conveyance. He also has to give advice regarding the consequential changes to the licensing framework to strengthen control of the conveyance of these dangerous goods.

12. In addition, CFO(P) has been liaising with departments concerned to work out inter-departmental arrangements with regard to the introduction of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) taxis and underground tanks. He has to oversee the formulation of safety requirements for the vehicles, workshops and LPG filling stations and, in consultation with the Operational Commands, set out associated operational procedures and staff training manuals to prepare for the change.

Other initiatives

13. There are other initiatives that require the personal attention of CFO(P). For example, he has to lead a review within FPC to enhance control over the performance of registered FSI contractors, as recommended in the Audit Report No. 31 issued in October 1998; to provide policy guidance in the development of a Fire Protection Information System to improve the overall efficiency of the FPC; and to review the control over the use of pyrotechnics in the film industry as well as to support the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority in drawing up relevant legislation for this purpose.

Need for a New Command

14. In view of the considerable expansion of FPC and the substantial increase in workload and new initiatives mentioned above, D of FS considers it increasingly difficult for CFO(P) to devote the required time and effort to all areas of work and to oversee the implementation of related policies. Having reviewed the present organisation structure, D of FS concludes that it is necessary to split the FPC into two Commands, namely the LCC and the FSC. The former will oversee the fire protection and safety in licensing and enforcement matters and the latter will take full responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of fire safety in existing buildings and promotion of community fire safety. To cope with the scale and complexity of work, each Command should be led by an officer of CFO rank. D of FS therefore proposes to create an additional CFO post.

15. The additional CFO, to be designated as CFO(Fire Safety) [CFO(FS)], will head the FSC and be accountable for enhancing public awareness on fire safety, maintenance of fire safety standards in existing buildings, and ensuring that the fire safety in old buildings throughout the territory are progressively upgraded to the required standards. He will liaise with policy bureaux and other Government departments concerned on the formulation of strategies and implementation of fire safety programmes. He will coordinate the three Operational Commands in drawing up inspection schedules and deploying the operational staff necessary to achieve this. The existing DCFO(P)2, to be re-designated as DCFO(FS), will provide assistance and support to the new CFO(FS).

16. Upon the creation of the CFO(FS) post, the existing CFO(P) and DCFO(P)1 will be re-designated as CFO(Licensing and Control) [CFO(LC)] and DCFO(LC) respectively. CFO(LC) will head the LCC, responsible for fire safety and protection matters pertaining to new developments as well as licensing control and overseeing the growing activities of the three Fire Protection Regional Offices. He will focus on the review of the Fire Services Ordinance and the Dangerous Goods Ordinance, formulate related legislative proposals and monitor the implementation plans in collaboration with the CFOs of the other Commands.

17. D of FS envisages that the proposed additional CFO post is required on a permanent basis as the enforcement of fire safety measures and the abatement of fire hazards necessary to achieve fire safety improvements are a continuous process. The job descriptions of the proposed CFO(FS) post and the CFO(LC) post are at Enclosures 4 and 5 respectively. The proposed organisation charts of the two Commands are at Enclosures 6 and 7.

Encls.4&5
Encls.6&7

/Alternatives

Alternatives considered

18. The alternative of creating one more DCFO post in FPC has been considered. However, as highlighted in the above paragraphs, the complexity and level of the increased responsibilities require the personal attention and direct input at CFO level. The creation of a third DCFO post cannot ease the overburdened situation of the CFO(P) or relieve him from the existing wide span of control.

19. Having critically assessed the responsibilities and workload of the other four CFO posts in FSD, D of FS considers that the new pressure faced by CFO(P) cannot be met through redistribution of duties amongst the existing CFO posts. Details of the workload and responsibilities of the existing CFOs in the Headquarters Command and the three Operational Commands are summarised at Enclosure 8.

Encl. 8

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. The additional notional annual salary cost of this proposal at MID-POINT is -

	\$	No. of Post
New permanent post	1,443,000	1

21. The additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$2,127,084.

22. In addition, to implement the re-organisation of the FPC into two commands, we have provided 29 non-directorate posts, at a notional annual mid-point salary cost of \$16,648,920 and a full annual average staff cost of \$27,300,120 in 1999-2000. These posts are to be created under the normal Departmental Establishment Committee mechanism, subject to the prevailing rules on recruitment.

23. We have included sufficient provision in the 1999-2000 Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal.

/BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

24. The post of CFO(P) was first created in 1965 when there were only four sections with an establishment of 89 posts under the then Fire Protection Bureau. With the gradual increase in responsibilities for fire protection in areas such as prescribed commercial premises and commercial buildings, the establishment of FPC increased to 399 by the end of February 1999.

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

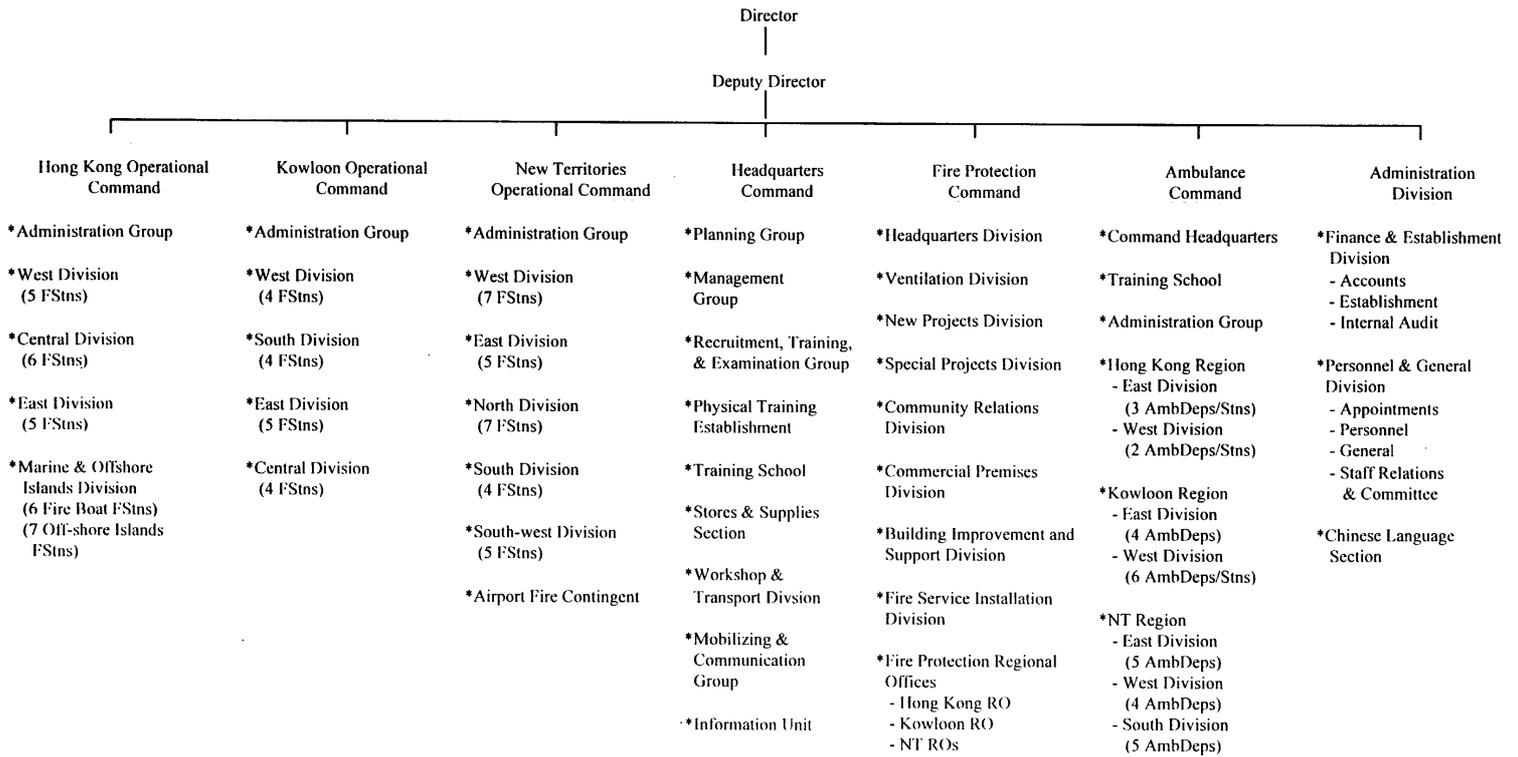
25. The Civil Service Bureau considers that the proposed ranking and grading of the post are appropriate.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DISCIPLINED SERVICES SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

26. The Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the permanent post of Chief Fire Officer would be appropriate if the post were to be created.

Security Bureau
April 1999

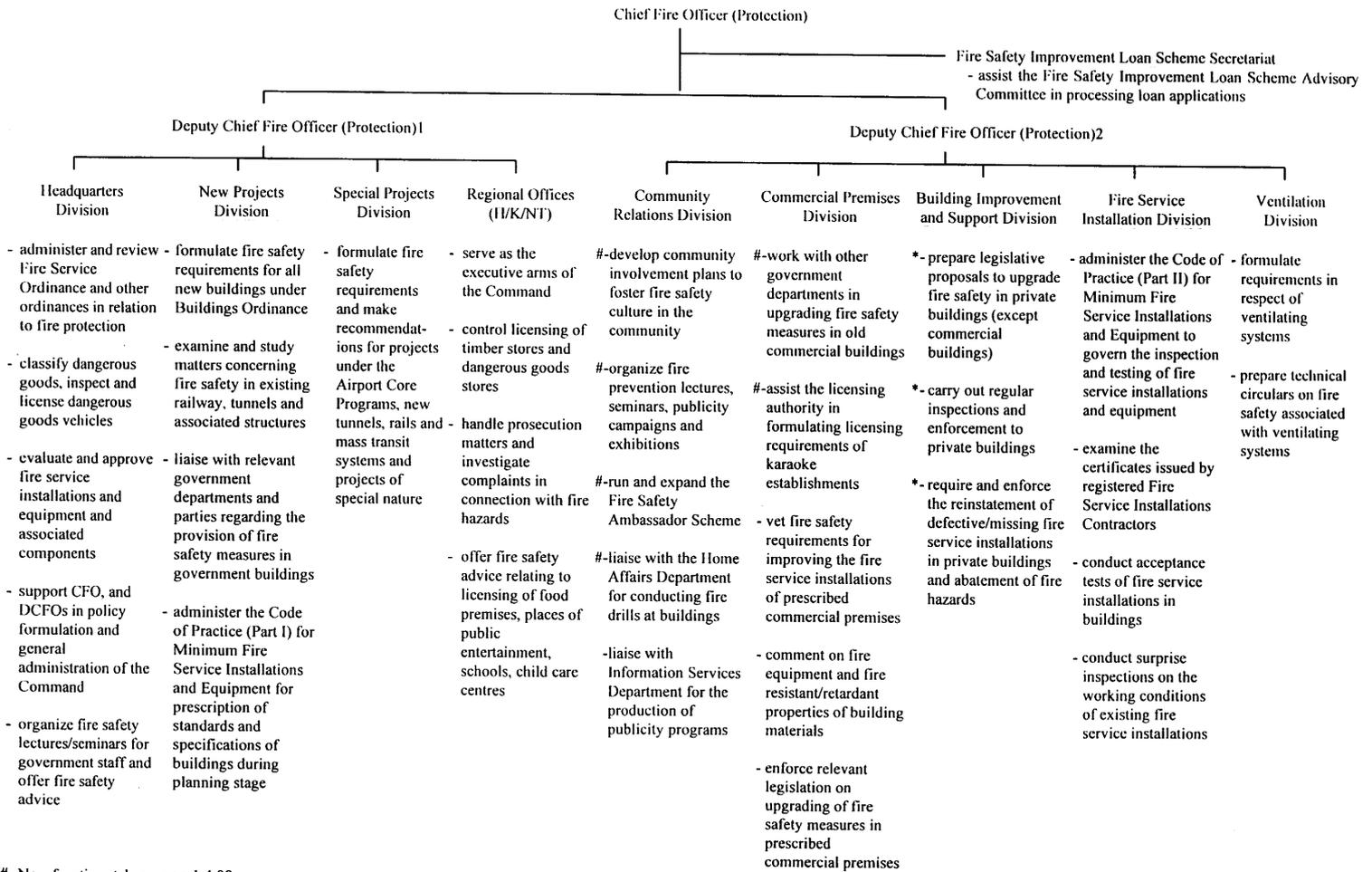
Organisation Chart of Fire Services Department



FStn - Fire Station
 AmbDep/Stn - Ambulance Depot/Station

Current Organisation Chart of Fire Protection Command (FPC)

Enclosure 2 to EC(1999-2000)7



New functions taken up on 1.4.98
 * New functions taken up on 1.4.99

Job description of the existing Chief Fire Officer (Protection) post

Head of the Fire Protection Command and responsible to the Deputy Director of Fire Services for the discipline, training, welfare, efficiency and proper performance of duties of all personnel under his command, in particular to -

1. ensure the consistent application of standards relating to fire prevention/protection in all statutory and advisory fields;
2. initiate and/or evaluate fire engineering research in relation to fire prevention/protection work;
3. promote the most effective fire prevention/protection means available and compatible with the progress and development of Hong Kong;
4. formulate and review Command policies, programmes and relevant legislation, instructions and codes of practice;
5. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the control and licensing of dangerous goods, food premises, places of public entertainment, hotels, guest-houses, child care centres and residential care homes for the elderly;
6. formulate fire safety requirements pertaining to the licensing of karaoke establishments;
7. ensure the effective implementation of the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance to require the upgrading of fire safety measures in prescribed commercial premises and specified commercial buildings;
8. enhance fire safety awareness and foster a fire safety culture in the community;
9. administer the Fire Safety Ambassador Scheme;
10. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the processing of building plans and administer the Code of Practice (Part I) on Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment;

11. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to inspection and acceptance tests of fire service installations and equipment, monitor the performance of registered fire service installation contractors and administer the Code of Practice (Part II) on Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment;
12. monitor the effective and efficient enforcement of the Fire Service Ordinance with regard to the general abatement of fire hazards in buildings and ensure the effective administration and operation of the Prosecution Section;
13. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the assessment, evaluation and approval of new fire service installations, components and equipment for use in the territory of Hong Kong;
14. monitor the effective and efficient operation of the Fire Safety Improvement Loan Scheme and chair the Fire Safety Improvement Loan Scheme Advisory Committee on behalf of the Director of Fire Services;
15. liaise with public organisations and operational Commands in formulating policies and procedures on the fire safety standards concerning railways, tunnels, mass transit systems and new infra-structures;
16. liaise with relevant policy bureaux and departments on policy matters concerning fire prevention/protection; and
17. liaise with the ICAC as required on anti-corruption matters affecting members under his command.

**Proposed job description of the
Chief Fire Officer (Fire Safety) post**

Head of the Fire Safety Command and responsible to the Deputy Director of Fire Services for the discipline, training, welfare, efficiency and proper performance of duties of all personnel under his command, in particular to -

1. ensure the consistent application of standards relating to fire prevention/protection in relevant statutory and advisory fields pertaining to his area of duties and responsibilities;
2. initiate and/or evaluate fire engineering research in relation to fire prevention/protection work pertaining to his area of duties and responsibilities;
3. promote the most effective fire prevention/protection means available and compatible with the progress and development of Hong Kong within his area of duties and responsibilities;
4. formulate and review Command policies, programmes and relevant instructions, codes of practice and legislation relevant to his area of duties and responsibilities;
5. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the improvement of fire safety measures in prescribed commercial premises, specified commercial buildings and other premises, and the inspection of fire safety provisions in such premises;
6. formulate legislative proposals and requirements for upgrading fire safety measures to existing private buildings;
7. ensure the effective dissemination of fire safety messages to the community with a view to improving the general fire safety awareness and enhancing fire safety culture among members of the public;
8. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to inspection and acceptance tests of fire service installations and equipment, monitor the performance of registered fire service installation contractors and administer the Code of Practice (Part II) on Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment;

9. monitor inspection of fire service installations in existing buildings and ensure reinstatement of fire service installations to their original approved standards;
10. monitor the effective and efficient operation of the Fire Safety Ambassador Scheme;
11. monitor the effective and efficient operation of the Fire Safety Improvement Loan Scheme and chair the Fire Safety Improvement Loan Scheme Advisory Committee on behalf of the Director of Fire Services;
12. liaise with relevant policy bureaux and departments on policy matters concerning fire prevention/protection relevant to his area of duties and responsibilities; and
13. liaise with the ICAC as required on anti-corruption matters affecting members under his command.

**Proposed Job description of the
Chief Fire Officer (Licensing & Control) Post**

Head of the Licensing and Control Command and responsible to the Deputy Director of Fire Services for the discipline, training, welfare, efficiency and proper performance of duties of all personnel under his command, in particular to

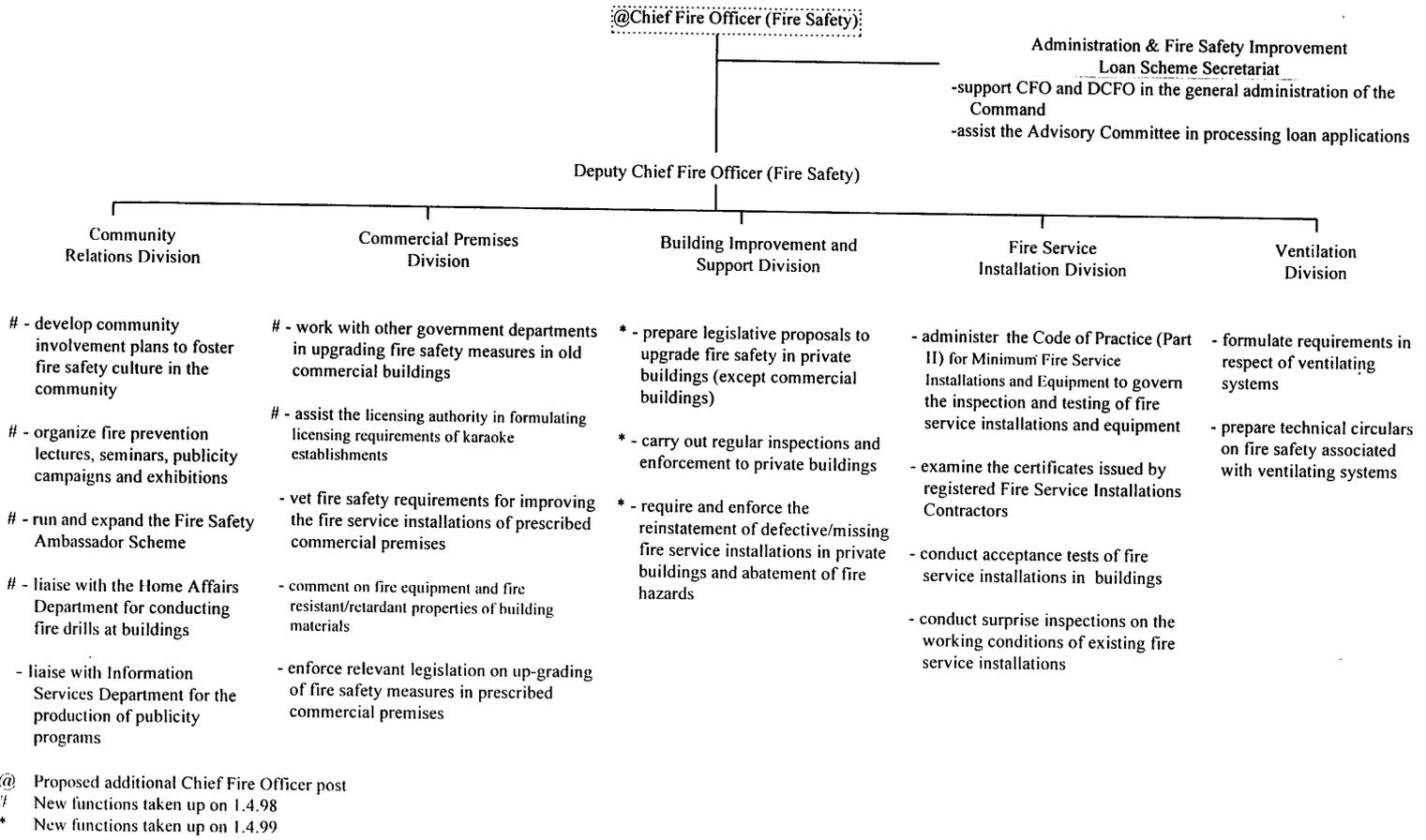
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1. ensure the consistent application of standards relating to fire prevention/ protection in relevant statutory and advisory fields pertaining to his area of duties and responsibilities;
2. initiate and/or evaluate fire engineering research in relation to fire prevention/ protection work pertaining to his area of duties and responsibilities;
3. promote the most effective fire prevention/protection means available and compatible with the progress and development of Hong Kong within his area of duties and responsibilities;
4. formulate and review Command policies, programmes and relevant instructions, codes of practice and legislation relevant to his area of duties and responsibilities;
5. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the control and licensing of dangerous goods, karaoke establishments, food premises, places of public entertainment, hotels, guest-houses, child care centres and residential care homes for the elderly;
6. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the processing of building plans and administer the Code of Practice (Part I) on Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment;
7. ensure the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the assessment, evaluation and approval of new fire service installations, components and equipment for use in the territory of Hong Kong;
8. monitor the effective and efficient enforcement of the Fire Service Ordinance with regard to the general abatement of fire hazards in buildings, and ensure the effective administration and operation of the Prosecution Section;

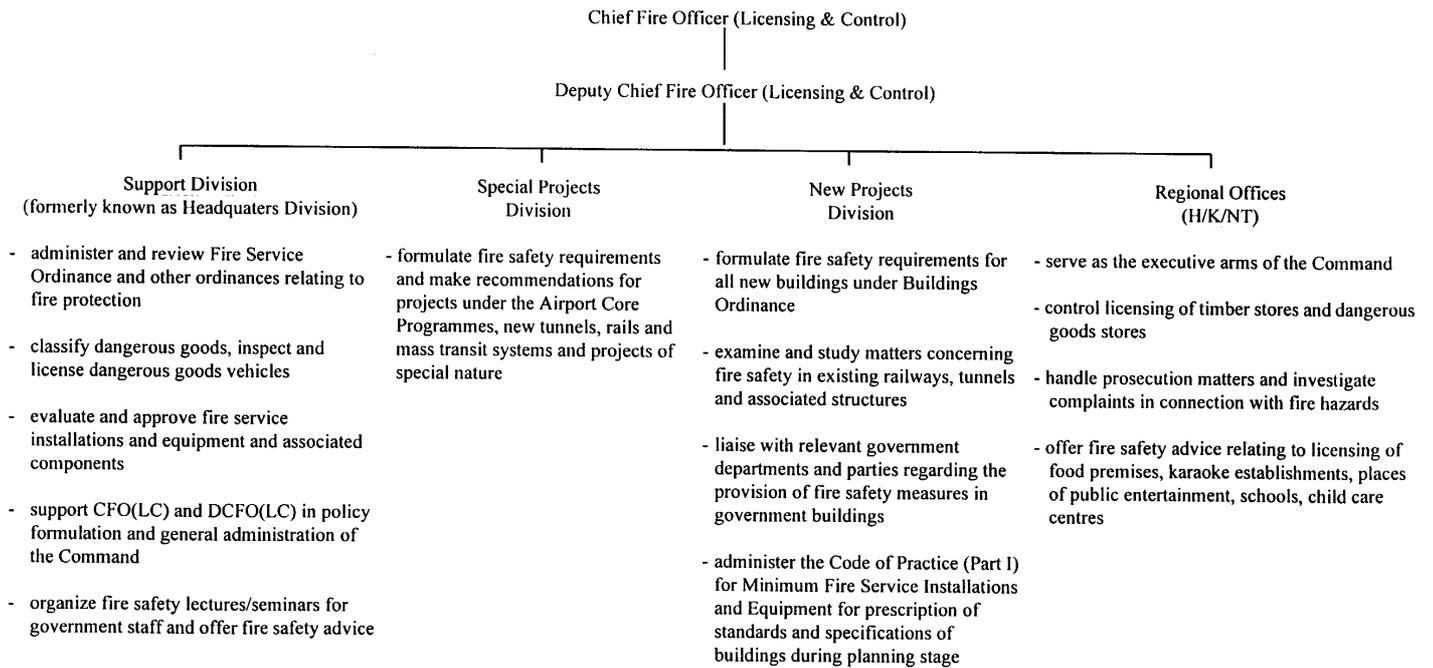
9. in association with the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing, create and develop a system and draw up relevant legislation for the control over the use of pyrotechnics in the filming industry;
10. keep under regular review the Dangerous Goods Ordinance, in particular, aspects concerning the classification, labelling, packing, exempted quantities and conveyance of dangerous goods, and chair the Dangerous Goods Standing Committee on behalf of the Director of Fire Services;
11. with the support of relevant information and technology expertise, oversee the establishment of the Fire Protection Information System and formulate relevant policies and procedures for its management and administration;
12. liaise with public organisations and Operational Commands in formulating policies and procedures on the fire safety standards concerning railways, tunnels, mass transit systems and new infra-structures;
13. liaise with relevant policy bureaux and departments on policy matters concerning fire prevention/protection relevant to his area of duties and responsibilities; and
14. liaise with the ICAC as required on anti-corruption matters affecting members under his command.

Proposed Organisation Chart of the Fire Safety Command

Enclosure 6 to EC(1999-2000)7



Proposed Organisation Chart of the Licensing and Control Command



Workload and Responsibilities of the Headquarters Command and Operational Commands

Headquarters Command

The Headquarters (HQ) Command is responsible for the overall control and implementation of Government's fire defence policies; for analysing actual and potential fire service problems; for forward planning and for coordinating the functions, staff and financial requirements of all other formations. It comprises nine units (please refer to Enclosure 1) with a wide range of functions such as planning for the provision of fire fighting and rescue services over the territory, evaluating development plans and feasibility study reports, conducting recruitment, examination and training, communication control and mobilisation of fire and ambulance resources, provisioning of stores and supplies, providing workshop and maintenance services, formulating public relations strategies and promoting the welfare of service members.

2. Being the head of the Command, CFO(HQ) has to directly supervise all the above areas of activities and recommend efficiency initiatives for continuous improvement, including the provision of mountain rescue training and equipment, the acquisition of diving support vessels and equipment, the planning of training facilities, the improvement of personal gear and fire-fighting equipment such as breathing apparatus sets and fog applicators, as well as the development of a Third Generation Mobilising System.

3. In addition, CFO(HQ) has been heavily involved in the setting of performance pledges and targets. He is also responsible for the review of departmental policies to match with changes of Government policies. These include the introduction of Green Management concept and various Ordinances in recent years, such as the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, the Equal Opportunity Ordinance, and the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

Fire Commands for Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories

4. The CFOs heading these operational Commands are responsible for the control and administration of fire services throughout their respective domains. They have to deploy strategically and flexibly the staff, equipment and appliances under their control to effectively maintain the fire fighting and rescue services in

/order

order to respond to emergency calls expeditiously. Currently, each command has an establishment of between 1 400 to 2 000 posts and over 70 fire appliances. The CFOs are fully committed to the direct supervision of the operational performance of their respective Commands. The continued growth in demand for fire services over the years has subject them to increasing pressure and challenge in the provision of an effective and efficient fire service within their Command areas, as evidenced by the following number of fire and special service calls -

	1996	1997	1998
Fire Calls	32 860	35 543	37 846
Special Service Calls	21 101	20 899	20 813
Grand Total	53 961	56 422 (+4.6%)	58 659 (+4.0%)

5. In fact, to cope with the increased volume and complexity of work in the control and administration of fire services, arising from the rapid development in the south-western part of the New Territories (NT) and the Lantau areas, an additional DCFO post¹ for the NT Fire Command was created in April 1998. The construction and completion of other major infrastructures, such as the Western Kowloon reclamation and the West Rail, and the subsequent large-scale developments will continue to impose great pressure and workload on the operational Commands.

¹ Members approved the creation of the DCFO post on 20 March 1998 *vide* EC(97-98)75.