

Information Paper for LegCo
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

**Mechanism for Dealing with Flooding Incidents and
Emergency Evacuations in the New Territories**

Introduction

This paper was produced at the request of the Special Meeting held on 20 May 2003 to provide Members with a brief account of the mechanism for dealing with flooding incidents and related emergency evacuations in the New Territories.

Duties of Relevant Government Departments In Handling Flooding Incidents

2. The Administration has a comprehensive contingency plan for responding to emergency situations arising from natural disasters, including flood events, resulting from severe weather conditions.

3. In general, Security Bureau is responsible for monitoring and supporting Government's overall response to major emergencies including those arising from severe weather conditions. The Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) which is manned by staff of the Government Secretariat will be activated whenever a Tropical Cyclone No. 8 Signal or higher, or a Black Rainstorm Warning Signal comes into effect. It may also be activated as a result of other severe weather conditions and/or emergency situations.

4. As regards flooding incidents, a number of government departments are involved. The related responsibilities of the major and relevant government departments are summarized in the following paragraphs.

a) Hong Kong Police Force (Police)

The main duty of Police in handling flooding incidents is to provide an emergency response in conjunction with FSD to the public at risk due to the flooding. Police will assist in the rescue and evacuation of villagers to a safe place.

b) Fire Services Department (FSD)

FSD is responsible for effecting evacuation and rescue services for flood victims, and providing emergency treatment to casualties and their conveyance to hospital. Upon the issuance of Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories, FSD will alert Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) and Civil Aid Service (CAS) according to the Hong Kong Contingency Plan for Natural Disasters.

c) Home Affairs Department (HAD)

As in other natural disasters, the Home Affairs Department assumes the role of “Disaster Relief Coordinator” and is responsible for coordinating relief measures and ensuring that those affected are cared for properly. District Officers in flood prone districts (i.e. North, Tai Po and Yuen Long) will, when situation warrants, set up a District Emergency Co-ordination Centre (DECC) to co-ordinate the provision of emergency relief services at the district level.

d) Drainage Services Department (DSD)

DSD is responsible for clearing and repairing blocked or damaged sewers and storm-drains, including engineered sections of open channels, main watercourses and for ensuring the satisfactory operation of floodwater pumping stations. During adverse weather, DSD and the contractor staff will stand ready to clear blocked drains and watercourses and to offer all the emergency assistance relating to the drainage system. The Department will set up an Emergency Control Centre (ECC) upon the issue of a Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or higher, a Red/ Black

Rainstorm Warning Signal or when circumstances so warrant. The Mainland North Region Emergency Control Centre will also be set up upon the issue of Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories or upon receipt of notification of water discharge from Shenzhen Reservoir. The ECC is set up to handle complaints on flooding, to manage emergencies that require DSD's participation and responses, and to liaise with relevant government departments and other government emergency organizations.

Action Taken by Relevant Government Departments in Handling Flooding Incidents on 5 May 2003

5. Police was involved in responding to 75 flooding reports in Northern New Territories and assisting FSD in the rescue of persons trapped by floodwater.

6. FSD was involved in the rescue and search for victims requiring assistance. FSD had also alerted Auxiliary Medical Service & Civil Aid Service for possible assistance required upon receipt of the Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories.

7. The District Emergency Co-ordination Centres of North District, Tai Po District and Yuen Long District of HAD were activated. HAD had also notified the village representatives of flood prone villages about the issuance of the Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories and the severe rainstorm warnings. In the North District, the Cheung Wah Community Hall was used as a temporary shelter and accommodated 8 victims. In the Yuen Long District, the Yuen Long Town Hall was also used as a temporary shelter and accommodated 2 victims.

8. As regards DSD, the Emergency Control Centre was activated to liaise with the relevant government departments, as well as to mobilize necessary resources and arrange emergency works to the drainage system in response to flooding reports received. A total of 84 flooding complaints in the Northern New Territories were received by DSD.

9. Details about the action taken by respective government departments in handling the more significant flooding incidents are summarized below:

a) Lin Ma Hang Road in Ta Kwu Ling

FSD and Police were involved in the rescue of a police constable and a villager, as well as the search for the Senior Inspector of Police reported missing. DSD immediately carried out work to remove debris and rubbish that had been washed into Ping Yuen River and trapped at the security grille in front of the outlet to Shenzhen River. All the work was completed on 6 May 2003.

b) Ping-Che

FSD was involved in eight flooding cases in Ping Che area and four persons were rescued. A telephone call had also been made to the HAD's DECC in North District regarding the flooding situation in Fung Wong Wu Village. Nevertheless, request for further assistance had not been made. DSD immediately carried out work to remove debris and rubbish from the watercourses concerned. All the work was completed on 6 May 2003.

c) Ma Liu Shui San Tsuen in Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling

FSD had thoroughly searched the affected areas but no emergency action was required. A telephone call had been made to the HAD's DECC of North District regarding a minor flooding incident in Lung Yeuk Tau. Nevertheless, request for further assistance had not been received. DSD completed the removal of debris and refuse that had been trapped in the drainage channel on 5 May 2003.

d) Yuen Leng in Kau Lung Hang, Tai Po

FSD had thoroughly searched the affected areas but no further emergency action was required.

e) Hung Mo Tam in Wang Toi Shan, Kam Tin

FSD had thoroughly searched the affected areas but no further emergency action was required. DSD immediately carried out work to remove the blockage from a 525 mm diameter cross-road drain. All the work was

completed on 6 May 2003.

f) Tai Kei Leng, Yuen Long

FSD was involved in the rescue of one uninjured person. A blocked drain was cleared by DSD on 5 May 2003.

g) Ma Tin Pok, Yuen Long

FSD was involved in the rescue of six uninjured persons. A request for desilting and removal of rubbish had been made to the HAD's DECC of Yuen Long District and referred to DSD for follow-up action. DSD carried out urgent work to remove the vegetation and debris that had been washed into the drainage channel concerned and to repair damaged railings. All the work was completed on 6 May 2003. Clearing of the channel bed was also subsequently completed.

Mechanism For Emergency Evacuation of Villagers Affected By Flooding and the Operation on 5 May 2003

10. The mechanism for emergency evacuation is based on the Hong Kong Contingency Plan for Natural Disasters.

11. Police will set up dedicated command centres to manage the emergency response. These command centres will coordinate emergency evacuation operations and where necessary the persons rescued will be conveyed to a temporary accommodation/shelter arranged by HAD. Police will also assist in the safe delivery of the persons concerned to the accommodation/shelter arranged.

12. FSD will make available rescue and ambulance resources for providing evacuation and rescue services for flood victims, emergency treatment to casualties and their conveyance to hospital. FSD will also alert AMS & CAS to provide support.

13. HAD will take a proactive attitude in dealing with flooding. They will activate the "Early Alert System" on rainstorm upon the issue of the Amber Rainstorm Signal to keep concerned District Officers informed of whether there will be heavy rain in their district, so that arrangements

may be put in hand in anticipation of the flooding. Moreover, upon receipt of a Special Announcement on Flooding in the Northern New Territories, district offices will also make the necessary arrangements with a view to alerting people affected by flooding as early as possible. On receipt of requests for assistance from victims in flood prone areas, HAD's staff will, depending on actual circumstances, refer the requests to Police or FSD for rescue work or transportation of victims to temporary shelters. Should circumstances warrant, HAD will also arrange with Government Land Transport Agency or other transportation contractors for hiring of coaches to transport victims to the shelters.

14. DSD will assist departments responsible for emergency rescue and evacuation and provide the following services :-

- (i) provide information on areas prone to flooding
- (ii) issue alerts to Police/FSD/HAD on flooding situation
- (iii) carry out emergency work where possible to clear blockages in the drainage system.

15. The above mechanism had been successfully activated on 5 May 2003.

Conclusion

16. Duties of respective government departments involved in handling flooding incidents are clearly defined. Mechanism for emergency evacuation of villagers affected by flooding is also set out in the Hong Kong Contingency Plan for Natural Disasters. The mechanism had been successfully activated on 5 May 2003 and emergency services were timely provided by the relevant government departments.

ETWB
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