香港特別行政區政府 消防處

E SONG YOUR SHOW

FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX 8

GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

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23 April 2009

Ms. Miranda HON Clerk, Public Accounts Committee Legislative Council Legislative Council Building 8 Jackson Road Central Hong Kong

Dear Ms HON,

The Director of Audit's Report on the results of value for money audits (Report No. 51) Emergency ambulance service (Chapter 4)

Thank you for your letter of 15 April 2009. The progress of the reviews in question is as follows:

Joint Education Programme

We have, in collaboration with other ambulance service providers including the Hospital Authority, St. John Ambulance Brigade and Auxiliary Medical Service, reviewed the feasibility of jointly organizing public education programmes to encourage proper use of ambulance services. All ambulance service providers welcome the idea and will make every effort to devise suitable education programmes to enhance the effectiveness of public education. A working group has been set up to formulate strategies and organize related activities. Various ways and means to strengthen public education have been worked out for further action by the group, e.g. broadcasting of education programmes in the Accident & Emergency Departments and clinics of the Hospital Authority, developing web-based programmes for publicity through the Web, conducting out-reach programmes at schools etc.

Benchmarking study on the 1-minute turnout time

We are finalizing the study and will complete the review in around May/June 2009.

Review on the efficiency and effectiveness of the urgent care ambulance service

We have examined the efficiency and effectiveness of our urgent care ambulance service. As there are a few issues to be further considered, we aim to conclude the matter in around May/June 2009. Pending the outcome of the review, we are in parallel working closely with the Hospital Authority to enhance the efficiency of the service, including improving the communication between the ambulance crews and HA staff with a view to shortening the waiting time of ambulances for picking up or handing over patients at hospitals. We are also exploring other means to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the service.

Review on the reasons for not meeting the baseline daily ambulance availability (DAA) on night shift in 2007

The reasons are that –

- (a) the rate of staff absence due to sickness was higher on night shift than on day shift as there is a smaller pool of staff on night shift;
- (b) the Urgent Care Fleet (UCF) and Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycle (EMAMC) that are available on day shift only cannot be deployed to augment the inadequacy of staff due to sickness during night shift; and
- (c) the manpower on day shift comprising two watches of ambulance personnel doubles that on night shift comprising one watch only. The smaller pool of staff on night shift is less capable of covering unexpected staff absences due to sickness.

Having regard to the above reasons, we will continue to monitor and review the situation so as to improve further the overall availability.

Speeding up the procurement process for ambulances

The measures described in para (b)(ii) of my letter to you dated 18 March 2009 will be adopted in the coming Capital Non-Works Resource Allocation Exercise for 2009.

Yours sincerely,

(LO Chun-hung)
Director of Fire Services

c.c. Secretary for Security (Attn : Ms. Carol YUEN)

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn: Ms. Bernadette LINN)

Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Attn : Mr. SHE Siu-kuen)

Director of Audit (Attn: Ms. Hildy CHAN)

Director of Government Logistics

<u>Internal</u>

Chief Ambulance Officer