

For Information
on 4 July 2012

**Legislative Council Panel on Security
Police's Crowd Control Arrangements in relation to
Public Meetings and Public Processions**

Introduction

This paper provides information on the Police's crowd control measures for public meetings and public processions.

Handling of Public Meetings and Public Processions

2. The freedom and right of procession and peaceful assembly are enshrined in Article 27 of the Basic Law and Section 8 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap. 383). The operational policy of the Police is to endeavour to strike a balance by facilitating all lawful and peaceful public meetings and processions on one hand and, on the other hand, reducing the impact of such meetings and processions on other members of the public or road users and to ensure public order and public safety. In exercising their freedom of expression, participants of public meetings or processions, should, under the premise of observing the Hong Kong law and without affecting public order, proceed in a peaceful and orderly manner.

3. Under the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245), any public meeting or procession the attendance of which exceeds the limit prescribed in the Ordinance, i.e. public meetings of more than 50 persons and public processions of more than 30 persons, should give notice to the Commissioner of Police (CP) not less than seven days prior to the intended event, and it can only be conducted if CP has not prohibited or objected to it. The notification should provide basic information including the date of public meeting or procession, time of commencement and duration, location or route, theme and estimated number of participants, etc. CP may impose condition(s) on a notified public meeting or procession to ensure public order and public safety, and the corresponding condition(s) imposed will be stated explicitly beforehand in the "letter of no objection" issued to the organiser. Organisers may appeal to the statutory Appeal Board on Public Meetings and Processions if they consider CP's decision unreasonable.

4. Generally speaking, upon receipt of a notification of a public meeting or procession, the Police will maintain an active and close communication with the organiser to offer advice and assistance. Police Community Relations Officers may also be present during the event as appropriate to act as a bridge of communication between the organiser and the Field Commander. The Police have a duty to take lawful measures to regulate public meetings and processions as appropriate to ensure public order and public safety.

Crowd Control Measures

5. The Police will make reference to the number of participants and information provided by organisers, past experience in handling similar events as well as other operational considerations when assessing the management measures required for the crowd, traffic and public transport services and manpower requirement for maintaining public safety and public order during the events. Therefore, the Police will, having regard to the anticipated number of participants, the past experience in handling similar events and so forth, endeavour to devise appropriate crowd management measures, including coordinating with the Transport Department on diversions of traffic and public transport services and related contingency measures, special crowd control measures, and/or arranging for the participants' entry into the venue or access to the starting point of the procession via different routes, etc. The Police will also liaise with the organisers when special circumstances so warrant, such as suggesting to the organisers the use of nearby locations to better accommodate participants of the events.

6. Before the conduct of public order events, the Police will communicate with the organisers on the detailed arrangements of the events, including crowd control measures to be implemented. In the course of public order events, the Police will maintain close liaison with the organisers and their marshals. To ensure that public processions and public meetings will continue to be conducted in a safe and orderly manner, the Field Commander will assess the situation at scene and, depending on the actual circumstances, implement ad-hoc crowd control measures when necessary.

Setting up of Designated Public Activity Areas

7. In handling public order events, the Police will, having taken into account the specific situations and various factors concerned, such as the geographical constraints of the venue concerned, the nature and

content of the event, the anticipated number of participants and the actual situation of the demonstration, as well as balancing the impact on local residents, traffic conditions and road users, consider setting up designated public activity areas (DPAAs) with a view to facilitating the conduct of public order events and ensuring public safety and public order.

8. The Police always handle public meetings and processions in a fair, just and impartial manner in accordance with the laws of Hong Kong. In handling public order events outside the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Police always strictly follow the principles mentioned in this paper and render assistance in such public order events so that they can be conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner.

Way Forward

9. From 2009 to 2011, a total of about 13 000 public meetings and about 3 670 public processions were held in Hong Kong (or an average of 15 events daily). The Police will continue to communicate with, and secure the support of, event organisers and take lawful measures so as to ensure public order and public safety during public events.

**Security Bureau
Hong Kong Police Force
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