

**For discussion
on 3 March 2015**

Legislative Council Panel on Security

**Creation of a Deputy Chief Fire Officer post for
implementing quality assurance and training accreditation mechanisms
in the Fire Services Department**

PURPOSE

The Fire Services Department (FSD) proposes to create a permanent Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) [GDS(C)1 or D1 equivalent] post in the Headquarters Command (HQ Command) for implementing quality assurance and training accreditation mechanisms. This paper seeks Members' views on the proposal.

BACKGROUND

2. The mission of FSD is to protect life and property of the public from fire and other calamities. While the number of major fires in Hong Kong has progressively decreased with better fire prevention practices and safer buildings, our firefighters are facing greater challenges with more complicated and difficult rescue operations, due to the increasingly complex structures of new infrastructure and buildings, as well as the completion of a number of large-scale cross-boundary and inter-district infrastructures and mass transit systems in recent years. To ensure public safety, it is imperative that our firefighters be well-equipped with advanced techniques for firefighting and rescue to maintain a high quality of service.

3. At present, after handling fire and special service incidents, the operational divisions and fire stations will conduct a self-evaluation for enhancing training and improving service quality at the respective division or station. With the growing number of large-scale cross-boundary and inter-district mass transit systems and infrastructures, different operational divisions and fire stations are required to cooperate more strategically in their operations and resource deployment with a view to handling emergencies efficiently and effectively. Hence, FSD considers it necessary to develop a unified quality assurance mechanism for enhancing the quality of fire services continuously and improving operational efficiency.

4. At the same time, with the rapid development in firefighting techniques, our firefighters are expected to be equipped with a higher level of professional knowledge and skills for handling emergencies than before. Furthermore, fire and ambulance personnel are often required to work closely for better synergy when dealing with large-scale emergencies. Upon the expected completion of the new Fire and Ambulance Services Academy (FASA) at Pak Shing Kok, Tseung Kwan O in end-2015, new recruits of fire and ambulance personnel will receive training at the same campus. In order to meet with the fast-changing social development and service requirement, FSD sees the need to develop a more forward-looking training accreditation mechanism to enhance and consolidate the firefighting and rescue techniques of fire and ambulance personnel.

Responsibilities of FSD's Headquarters Command

5. Currently, the HQ Command is overseen by a Chief Fire Officer (CFO) [GDS(C)2 or D2-equivalent] [designated as CFO(HQ)]. The work of the CFO covers a wide portfolio, encompassing resources planning, mobilising and communications, recruitment and training, information technology management and procurement etc., and is now assisted by one DCFO [designated as DCFO(HQ)].

6. To meet the rising service demand of emergency services and public expectation, FSD has implemented a number of new initiatives in recent years, such as the enhancement of the Third Generation Mobilising System; upgrading of the radio and communication system; the implementation of the Incident Information Dissemination Mechanism; the development of the Asset Management and Maintenance System, etc. To meet special operational demand, FSD has also established various service teams, including the Special Rescue Squad, Urban Search and Rescue Team and High Angle Rescue Team, etc. The above initiatives and service teams are coordinated by the HQ Command.

7. The HQ Command is also responsible for spearheading a number of new initiatives to be rolled out in the near future, including the development of a computer system for the provision of more comprehensive post-dispatch advice in the handling of emergency ambulance calls; the strategic planning of information systems in FSD to meet the Department's information and business development needs; the planning of new fire stations and ambulance depots to meet the emergency service demand for new infrastructures (e.g. a fire station-cum-ambulance depot at the Boundary Crossing Facilities of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge); the introduction of more advanced fire appliances and equipment, etc.

8. In addition, the new FASA will be overseen by the HQ Command upon its commissioning. The new FASA will replace the Fire Services Training School (FSTS) and the Ambulance Command Training School to become the major institution for training FSD personnel. The new campus will be equipped with various simulation training facilities which will allow fire personnel to receive realistic training in a safe simulated setting, so as to better equip them with firefighting and rescue techniques to enhance operational efficiency.

9. The tasks of the HQ Command, which often require high-level policy steer and strategic inputs, have already stretched the limit of the existing CFO(HQ) and DCFO(HQ). FSD therefore considers it necessary to create a new DCFO post to assist CFO(HQ) in taking forward more initiatives in enhancing the quality of services rendered by FSD, including the introduction of the proposed quality assurance and training accreditation mechanisms.

Proposed quality assurance (QA) mechanism

10. To enhance operational efficiency and performance standard in firefighting/rescue operations, as well as the quality of training for fire stream personnel, FSD proposes to establish a specialised and institutionalised QA mechanism¹ to set out clear and consistent service quality standards and inspection criteria, as well as enhancing the service quality standards of our firefighters through the implementation of the following measures –

- (a) conducting regular and spot checks at fire stations to inspect the day-to-day training of different stations and divisions for ensuring that the training in each station can attain high quality;
- (b) in addition to institutionalising the current practice of self-evaluation by the commander of individual fire station/division on the handling of day-to-day fire and special services, establishing a new dedicated team to carry out field inspection of the approach adopted by frontline personnel when handling large-scale fire, special services² as well as large-scale drills (e.g. those conducted to enhance the preparedness for aircraft crash and MTR station incidents). The dedicated team will also summarise the overall performance on such

¹ There is already a computer-aided Paramedic Services Quality Assurance System implemented in the Ambulance Command of FSD since August 2010 to monitor and objectively assess the clinical performance of frontline ambulance personnel through assessing their medical protocol compliance based on pre-set rules and logics, with a view to identifying training needs. There is no corresponding QA system for fire stream personnel.

² In 2014, there were a total of 36 335 fire calls and 33 420 special service calls.

areas as incident command and control, breathing apparatus control, radio communications, and firefighting and rescue tactics; and

- (c) conducting case reviews for large-scale fire and special services and consolidating good practices to be promoted to various operational units³.

11. Having regard to the result of the field observations as well as the feedbacks and inputs collected in the case reviews, FSD can make necessary modification of the operational protocols and procedures to enhance operational efficiency, and better align the standard of service rendered by different fire operational units. In terms of training, lessons learnt from the field observations and case reviews will also be incorporated into the day-to-day training. Coupled with spot checks at fire stations, these coordinated efforts can help ensure that the training standards across different operational units of the Department is aligned and suitably updated for enhancing the standards of training on a sustained basis. 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. The relationship between the proposed QA mechanism, training and frontline operations is illustrated at **Enclosure 1**.

Proposed training accreditation mechanism

12. To complement the commissioning of the new FASA, FSD plans to review the content of the various fire stream training programmes in place according to the benchmark quality standards to be devised under the QA mechanism. The Department will also explore the establishment of a training accreditation mechanism for the knowledge and skills tailor-made for the fire services in Hong Kong. With reference to the quality standards of advanced overseas countries and regions, and taking into account local circumstances and needs, FSD will formulate corresponding training requirements and inspection standards for each operational aspect to accredit the qualifications and standards of its personnel. Where necessary, FSD will also modify and enhance the training programmes conducted at the new FASA and fire stations, with a view to ensuring that the requisite skills and knowledge are imparted to the fire stream staff for meeting the escalating training needs.

³ The proposed QA mechanism will be applicable to all operational units in the fire stream in FSD, including a total of 81 fire stations across the territory, six Fireboat Stations, one Diving Unit and two berths at the Airport Fire Contingent, and various specialised units/teams (e.g. Urban Search and Rescue Team, Hazardous Material Team, High Angle Rescue Team).

PROPOSED CREATION OF A PERMANENT DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER POST

Justification

13. The implementation of the proposed QA and training accreditation mechanisms is a complicated task requiring high-level strategic judgement and coordination with various units. It thus needs to be steered by a directorate officer possessing professional knowledge about fire services, exposure and vision. In this connection, FSD proposes to create a DCFO post in the HQ Command, to be designated as DCFO (Quality Assurance and Management) [DCFO(QA&M)], who will spearhead the strategic quality planning for services rendered by FSD under a specialised and institutionalised QA mechanism. The post holder will also be responsible for the operation of the new FASA to be commissioned shortly. The management of training resources currently under the purviews of FSTS, the Fire Services Ambulance Command Training School (which is managed by the Ambulance Command at present) and the Recruitment, Training and Examination (RTE) Group will be consolidated under the oversight of the post holder. He will also share the heavy workload currently borne by DCFO(HQ), including managing career development of staff as well as grooming staff for specialist functions in the fire and ambulance streams. Such arrangement will enable better planning and formulation of departmental policies and strategies on training and human resources management having regard to the recommendations made under the QA mechanism.

14. Specifically, the main duties of DCFO(QA&M) will include –

- (a) planning and overseeing the development and implementation of the proposed QA mechanism for the fire stream, overseeing the implementation of the existing QA mechanism of the ambulance stream, and keeping the QA mechanisms under regular review;
- (b) planning and overseeing the development and implementation of the training accreditation mechanism for the knowledge and skills tailor-made for fire services;
- (c) taking charge of the operation and management of the new FASA as the Commandant of the Academy;
- (d) formulating and monitoring departmental training policies and strategies as well as managing training expenses in FSD; and

- (e) giving strategic steer on the training and development of departmental human resources.

15. The job description of the proposed DCFO(QA&M) post is at **Enclosure 2**. Upon creation of the post, DCFO(HQ) will remain fully engaged with his portfolio covering resources planning, procurement and logistics, mobilising and communications, information technology, workshop and transport service as well as public relations. The revised job description of DCFO(HQ) is at **Enclosure 3**. The proposed organisation chart of FSD at the directorate level is at **Enclosure 4**.

16. Currently, DCFO(HQ) is already overloaded by his responsibilities in overseeing a total of 11 units under the HQ Command. Upon creation of the post, DCFO(QA&M) will, in addition to implementing the proposed QA mechanism, take over some of the units originally overseen by DCFO(HQ). DCFO(QA&M) will be responsible for supervising five units and leading over 200 non-directorate staff, including four officers at the senior professional level, namely three existing Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) posts in the FSTS, Management Group and RTE Group and a new Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer (SACAO) post. Specifically, DCFO(QA&M) will lead one SDO and one SACAO to oversee fire services training and ambulance services training, and to implement the QA mechanisms for both streams. The existing and proposed organisation charts of the HQ Command are at **Enclosure 5**.

Alternatives considered

17. We have critically examined the possible redeployment of existing directorate officers in FSD to absorb the additional workload arising from the proposed QA mechanism and initiatives related to staff training. At present, there are seven DCFO posts in FSD, established respectively in the HQ Command, three Operational Fire Commands, Licensing and Certification Command and Fire Safety Command. Their duties are at **Enclosure 6**. Since all DCFO officers have fully committed to duties in different subject areas, internal redeployment is considered operationally not feasible without adversely affecting the discharge of their schedules of duties.

Financial implications

18. The proposed creation of the DCFO post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,552,800. The additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal including salaries and staff on-cost

is \$2,026,000⁴. The required provision will be reflected in the 2015-16 Estimates.

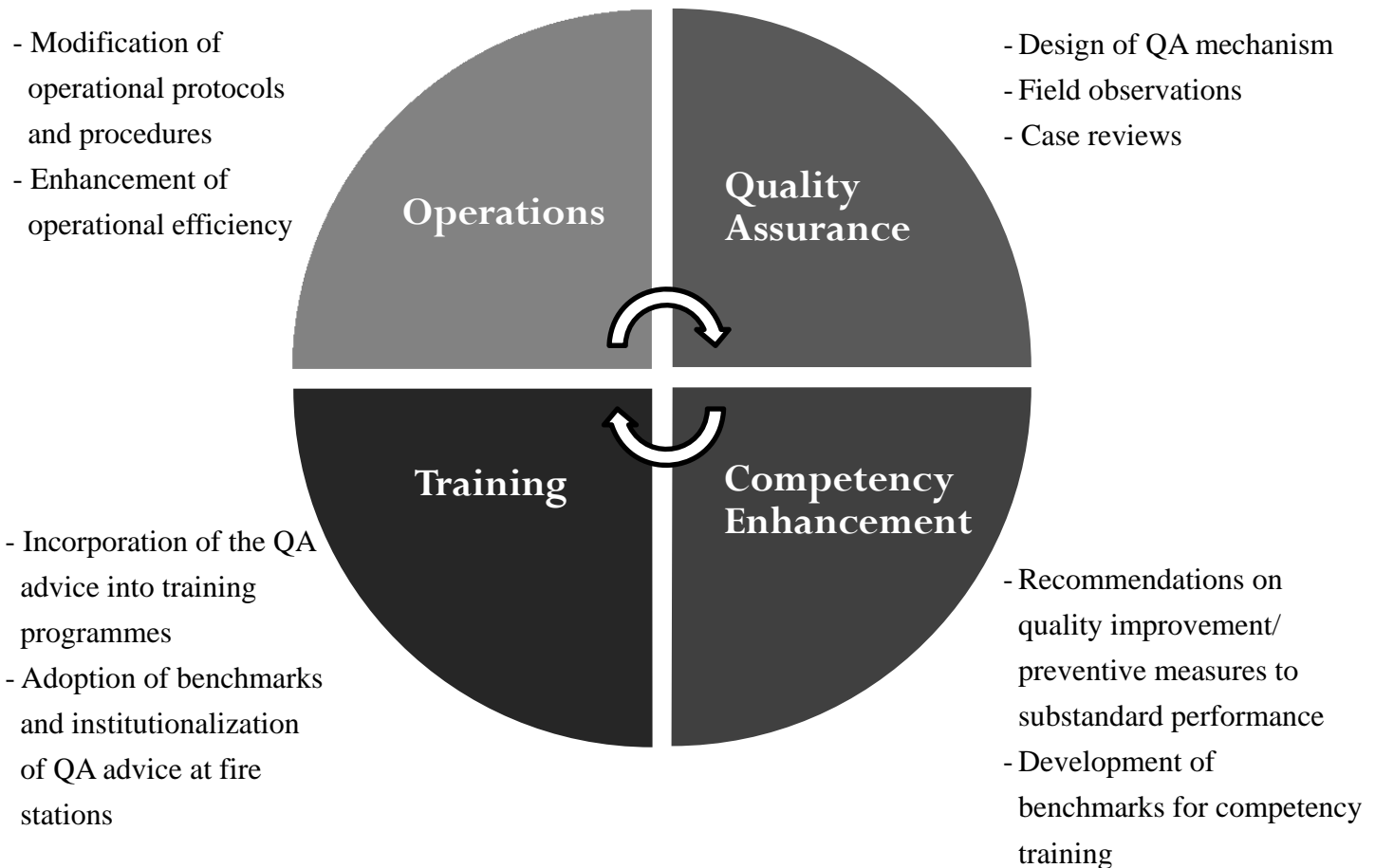
WAY FORWARD

19. Subject to Members' view, we plan to submit the proposal to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration in the second quarter of 2015.

Security Bureau
March 2015

⁴ The annual average staff cost after pay adjustment will be updated in due course.

**Relationship Between the Proposed Quality Assurance (QA) Mechanism,
Training and Frontline Operations**



Job Description

Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Quality Assurance and Management)

Rank : Deputy Chief Fire Officer [GDS(C)1]

Responsible to : Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters)
[GDS(C)2]

Main duties and responsibilities –

1. To plan and oversee the development and implementation of the proposed quality assurance (QA) mechanism for the fire stream, and oversee the implementation of the existing QA mechanism for the ambulance stream;
2. To be the Commandant of the new Fire and Ambulance Services Academy;
3. To plan and oversee the development and implementation of the training accreditation mechanism for the knowledge and skills tailor-made for the fire services;
4. To formulate and monitor the implementation of departmental training policies and strategies to cope with HKSAR Government's Contingency Plan, as well as to manage training expenses;
5. To oversee departmental recruitment matters;
6. To be responsible for the departmental human resources planning, development and deployment, and career management;
7. To oversee departmental welfare and occupational safety and health matters;
8. To monitor the physical fitness standard of Service members and physical fitness assessments; and
9. To give advice on the corporate resources planning relating to acquisition of fire appliances and equipment for firefighting and rescue operation.

**Revised Job Description
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters)**

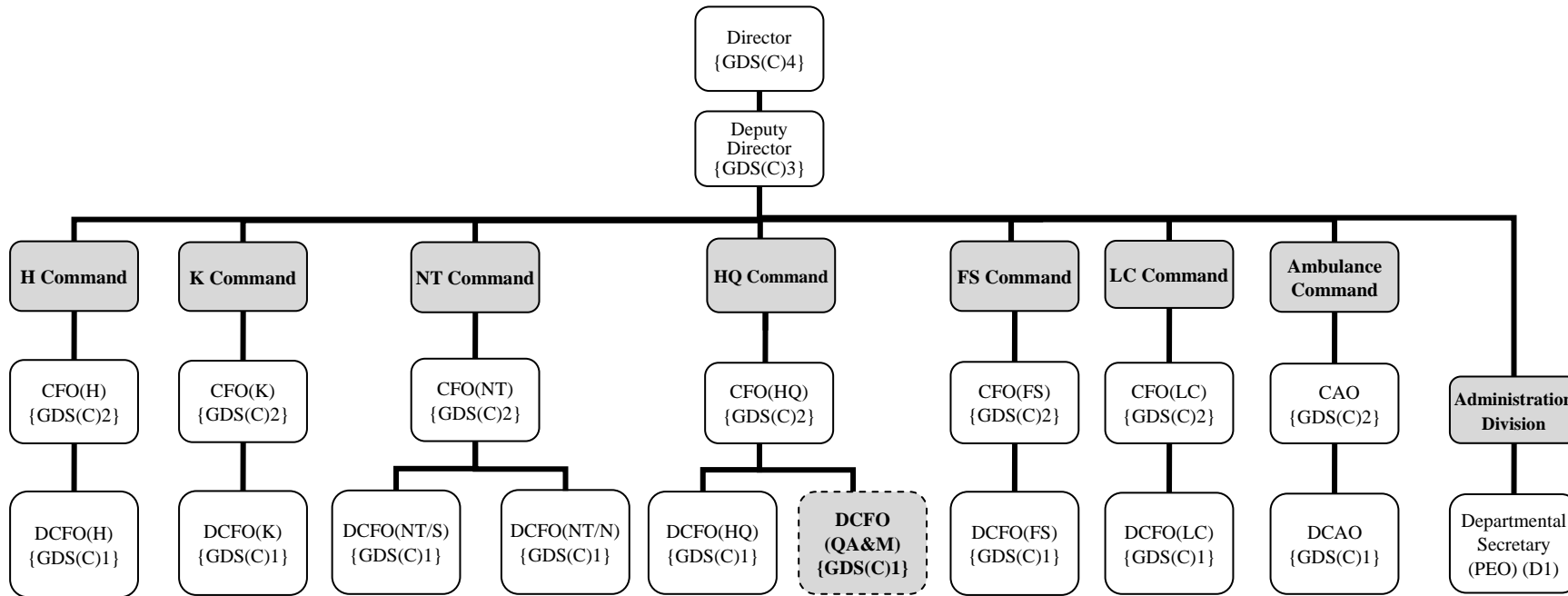
Rank : Deputy Chief Fire Officer [GDS(C)1]

Responsible to : Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters)
[GDS(C)2]

Main duties and responsibilities –

1. To oversee the corporate resources planning and related resources allocation exercises to complement the planning and development of the territory;
2. To oversee the development and enhancement of mobilising and communications system and other computer projects to maintain/enhance the efficiency in operation and communications;
3. To supervise the provision of supporting services relating to procurement and logistics, workshop and transport as well as information technology management to facilitate the delivery of quality services to the public;
4. To monitor the handling of press and public enquiries and advise on dissemination of information and public relations strategies;
5. To liaise and coordinate with policy bureaux/government departments on matters relating to security, emergency response and management, as well as contingency planning; and
6. To coordinate and supervise the work of departmental representatives on District Councils and District Management Committees.

Proposed Organisation Chart of the Fire Services Department



Legend

GDS (C) = General Disciplined Services (Commander)

H = Hong Kong

K = Kowloon

NT = New Territories

HQ = Headquarters

FS = Fire Safety

LC = Licensing and Certification

CFO = Chief Fire Officer

CAO = Chief Ambulance Officer

DCFO = Deputy Chief Fire Officer

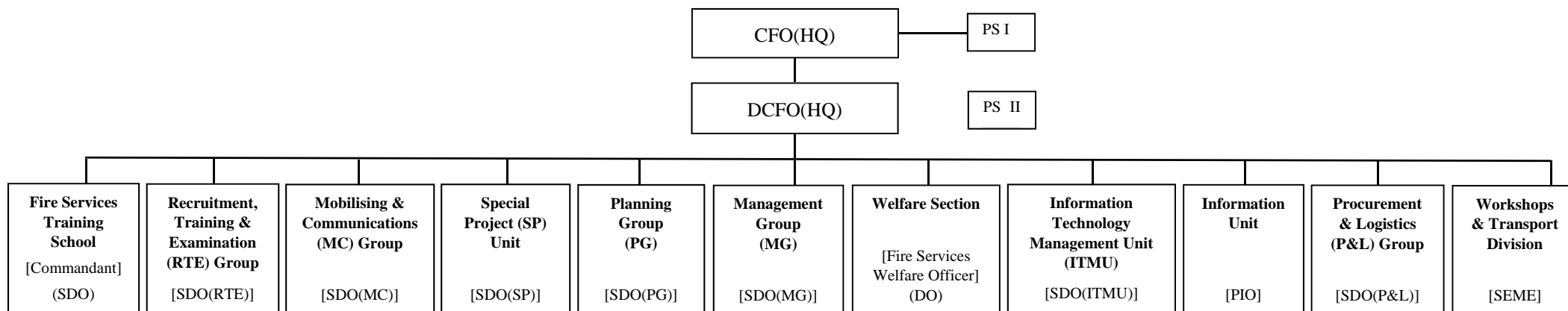
DCAO = Deputy Chief Ambulance Officer

QA&M = Quality Assurance and Management

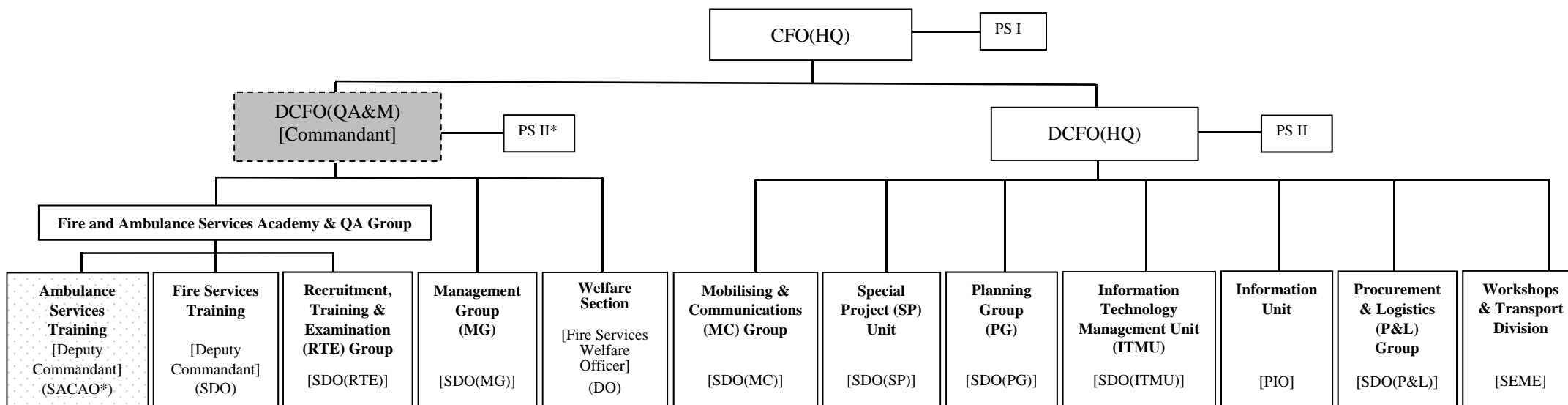
PEO = Principal Executive Officer

Proposed new DCFO post

Existing Organisation Chart of the Headquarters (HQ) Command



Proposed Organisation Chart of the Headquarters (HQ) Command



Legend:

- CFO: Chief Fire Officer
- DCFO: Deputy Chief Fire Officer
- SDO: Senior Divisional Officer
- SACAO: Senior Assistant Chief Ambulance Officer
- DO: Divisional Officer
- PIO: Principal Information Officer
- SEME: Senior Electrical and Mechanical Engineer
- PS I/II: Personal Secretary I/II
- QA&M: Quality Assurance and Management
- [] Unit Head

*: Posts to be created in 2015-16

Proposed DCFO post

The ambulance services training is proposed to come under the management of the HQ Command.

**Existing Duties of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer Posts
in the Fire Services Department**

At present, there are 18 permanent directorate posts in the Department, of which seven are Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) posts established under six Commands, namely the Headquarters Command, three Operational Fire commands, the Licensing and Certification Command and the Fire Safety Command. The distribution and the major responsibilities of the DCFO posts are as follows –

(A) Headquarters (HQ) Command (1 DCFO)

One DCFO post is established under the HQ Command to assist Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters) [CFO(HQ)] in overseeing the resources planning, fire services training, procurement and logistics, mobilising and communications, information technology, workshop service, recruitment and training, special projects, staff welfare as well as complaints handling and public relations.

(B) Three Operational Fire Commands (4 DCFOs)

Four DCFO posts are established under the three operational fire commands (one under the Hong Kong Command, one under the Kowloon Command, and two under the New Territories Command). The DCFOs are responsible for assisting the respective Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) in planning, coordinating and controlling the deployment of Command resources of manpower and appliances, taking personal command of Fire Services operations at serious incidents within his Command, as well as monitoring the staff, administrative and disciplinary matters of the Command.

(C) Licensing and Certification (LC) Command (1 DCFO)

One DCFO post is established under the LC Command to assist CFO(LC) in formulating, certifying and reviewing the fire safety standards of new buildings, alterations to buildings, food premises, public entertainment premises, etc., monitoring the licensing control on the use, storage, manufacture and conveyance of dangerous goods as

well as timber stores, ensuring the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to fire service installations and registration of contractors, as well as administering the legislation in relation to the abatement of fire hazards.

(D) Fire Safety (FS) Command (1 DCFO)

One DCFO post is established under the FS Command to assist CFO(FS) in formulating, implementing and reviewing fire safety policies, ensuring the effective implementation of policies and procedures relating to the improvement of fire safety measures in prescribed commercial premises, specified commercial buildings, railway development, new building projects, domestic and composite buildings and other premises, liaising with the public and private sectors on fire prevention/protection matters, as well as disseminating the message of fire safety to the community.