

香港特別行政區政府  
保安局



The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Security Bureau

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Ms Betty MA  
Clerk to Panel on Security  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

25 April 2016

Dear Ms MA,

**Panel on Security**  
**Follow-up issues relating to the meeting held on 1 March 2016**

Thank you for your letter of 2 March 2016 regarding the No. 3 alarm vessel fire which broke out at Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter on 27 September 2015. Our reply, in consultation with relevant departments, is as follows:

**Incident occurrence and emergency responses**

After receiving a fire report involving fishing vessels at Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter at 2:01pm on 27 September 2015, the Fire Services Communications Centre immediately turned out two fireboats (namely Fireboat No. 1, which was berthed at Central Fireboat Station and was the closest to the scene of incident at the time; and Fireboat No. 4, which was berthed at Aberdeen Fireboat Station), one diving support vessel and one diving support speedboat, together with five major fire appliances on land direct to the scene.

Upon arriving at Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter at 2:07pm (i.e. six minutes from the time of call), the land crews boarded a police launch with firefighting equipment and set off for the scene for firefighting and rescue operation. Fireboat No. 1 and the diving support vessel also arrived on the scene at 2:27pm (i.e. 26 minutes from the time of call).

As many vessels were leaving Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter at that time to avoid being affected by the fire and were clustering at the waters near the access to the typhoon shelter, the vessels of the Fire Services Department (FSD) had to cautiously cruise through the dense cluster of vessels at a safe speed when entering the typhoon shelter. Moreover, when cruising inside the typhoon shelter, FSD's vessels had to take heed of vessels berthing at or navigating inside the typhoon shelter to ensure a safe distance from other vessels so as to avoid collision.

After the fireboats arrived on the scene, fireboat monitors on board were immediately utilised to combat the fire. As the wind was rather strong at that time and the vessels involved had been anchored together, the fire spread rapidly and a number of explosions on the vessels involved were heard. The officer-in-charge of the incident upgraded the fire to No. 3 alarm at 2:38pm (i.e. 31 minutes after arrival) and summoned additional fireboats and other resources for the firefighting and rescue operation. The blaze was surrounded at 3:28pm and was put under control at 4:37pm. The fire was eventually extinguished at 11:57pm.

In accordance with the departmental operation manual of emergency response and relief services in the event of natural disasters, the Eastern District Office (EDO) set up an inter-departmental help desk at the office of EDO at 7:30pm that night, in collaboration with members from FSD, the Marine Department (MD), the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and the Social Welfare Department, to provide assistance for people in need.

During the fire, two men and three women sustained light abrasions to their limbs, and were conveyed to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital by ambulances for treatment. According to the assessment of post-fire situation, 29 vessels were involved in the fire.

#### *Deployment of firefighting and ambulance resources*

A total of eight breathing apparatus teams, 292 fire and ambulance personnel, three fireboats, one diving support vessel, three diving support speedboats/speedboats, 45 major fire appliances and 11 ambulances were deployed by FSD in this operation, including resources for relief and support. Eight fireboat monitors and ten jets from fireboats, marine police launches and those operated at seafront were used. In addition, six marine police launches were mobilised by HKPF for conveying fire personnel to the scene and assisting in firefighting. MD also engaged two patrol launches and officers to control the marine traffic and assess the seaworthiness of affected vessels.

### *Cause of fire*

Pursuant to the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548), MD had conducted an investigation into the incident, and exchanged views with FSD on observations during the firefighting and rescue operation and findings on the cause of fire. Based on MD's preliminary investigation, it was found that the fire might be caused by a short circuit arising from the aging electrical wiring in the cabin of the fishing vessel. MD is preparing a detailed report.

### **Review and promotion after the fire**

FSD formed a Working Group in December 2015 to review the contingency arrangements in typhoon shelters, which included typhoon shelter contingency plans, operational procedures, firefighting resources and co-operation among various government departments.

After reviewing the existing firefighting equipment against marine fires, the Working Group proposed, among other things, to procure a new model of light portable pump that was much lighter and easier to use on vessels than the original model. To enhance the operational efficiency of land crews in dealing with vessel fires inside a typhoon shelter, the new light portable pumps have already been equipped on Major Pumps deployed at fire stations in the vicinity of major typhoon shelters. In addition, two Mini Vans deployed at Sai Kung and Ap Lei Chau Fire Station have been converted to accommodate the new light portable pumps so as to enhance the firefighting capability in coastal areas nearby.

### *Fire safety promotion*

To raise the fire safety awareness of vessel owners/operators in typhoon shelters, FSD will step up patrol along the navigational channels in typhoon shelters during the peak seasons of fishing vessels berthing at typhoon shelters. FSD personnel will also distribute fire safety publicity leaflets and broadcast messages on vessel fire safety during patrol. In addition, FSD will organise thematic talks for typhoon shelter users in various districts on a regular basis or upon request, with a view to enhancing their fire safety awareness.

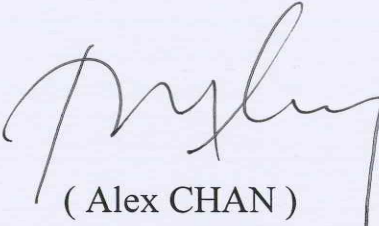
After the vessel fire at Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter, an additional speedboat equipped with a fire pump was deployed to Shau Kei Wan Typhoon Shelter for patrol and fire safety promotion from 23 January to 16 February 2016 (around the Lunar New Year period) during day time (10am to 6pm) and standing by at North Point Fireboat Station during night time.

In addition, FSD, HKPF and MD will conduct fire drills in typhoon shelters before the fishing moratorium and the Lunar New Year every year to enhance the efficiency in firefighting and rescue operations as well as strengthen co-ordination among relevant departments in response to marine fires. The three departments had held inter-departmental fire exercises before the Lunar New Year period this year from 19 to 25 January at five major typhoon shelters (namely Cheung Chau, Causeway Bay, Shau Kei Wan, Aberdeen and Tuen Mun).

FSD will continue to closely monitor the various developments within the waters of Hong Kong and assess the fire risks from time to time. Deployment of firefighting resources and operational strategies will also be reviewed regularly to ensure that appropriate deployment is made to keep in line with the demand for different zones of water and during different time intervals. MD will pay particular attention to the storage of excessive fuel on board during routine patrol and initiate prosecution actions when necessary.

For further information, please contact the undersigned at 2810 3435 or Mr. LEUNG Kwun-hong, Assistant Director (Headquarters) of FSD at 2733 7733.

Yours sincerely,



( Alex CHAN )  
for Secretary for Security

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