



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局  
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

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[English Translation]

20 May 2019

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attention: Miss Josephine SO)

Dear Miss SO,

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
Post-Typhoon Follow-Up Efforts under the Purview of  
the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**

Regarding the captioned subject at the Panel meeting on 13 November 2018, further to our reply on the follow-up issued on 11 December 2018, the review on handling super typhoons as co-ordinated by the Security Bureau has been completed. An extract of the review results relevant to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is at **Annex**.

In the aftermath of the typhoon, FEHD spared no effort in mobilising resources for clearing up typhoon debris and performing street cleansing services, and deployed a workforce of about 8 000 each day for

follow-up work. Taking into account the experience, FEHD has increased manpower and the number of grab lorries in outsourced cleansing services contracts for more elastic and flexible deployment of contractors' resources in order to enhance post-typhoon street clearance work.

Yours sincerely,

[ Signed ]

(Gilford LAW)  
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

**Extract from the Discussion Paper on  
“Review of the Government’s Handling of Super Typhoon”  
of the Legislative Council Panel on Security on 7 May 2019**

*(2) Enhancing Efficiency in Clearing Fallen Trees and Debris*

8. Timely clearance of fallen trees and debris from carriageways is crucial to the resumption of traffic and public transport, and would be beneficial to the other recovery efforts. Under the extreme situation like in MANGKHUT, Development Bureau (DEVB)’s standing mechanism applicable to works departments named “Emergency Command System” (ECS)<sup>6</sup> was triggered to assist Highways Department (HyD) in expediting the clearance of fallen trees and debris that blocked the major thoroughfares taking into account the priorities set out by different departments. Tree cutting and clearance resources from all works departments were pooled together under the central deployment by HyD. With the concerted efforts, most of the roads were cleared and over 95% of the franchised bus services resumed service within two days after the passage of MANGKHUT. The Government considered ECS to be operationally effective in allowing the community to quickly resume normal in the initial recovery stage. In this connection, ECS will continue to be activated in the immediate aftermath of super typhoons for emergency work, if considered necessary.

9. As for the subsequent non-critical tree and debris clearance in the territory which was taken forward based on normal handling procedures<sup>7</sup>, the work has taken significantly longer time than usual. The reasons as

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<sup>6</sup> In the event that the scale of an emergency incident is beyond the capability of an individual works department (e.g. HyD) to handle, DEVB would consider mobilizing ECS in order to enhance the coordination of emergency work for early completion.

<sup>7</sup> Before clearance could be arranged on a non-critical spot by a particular government department, a responsibility-identification process was required through site inspection and ownership identification. In some cases, difficulties such as complication in accessing the spots, legal limitation (Noise Control Ordinance, Cap. 400) on tree cutting at night hours in the vicinity of residential areas, etc. might further lengthen the clearance process.

identified (other than the sheer number of fallen trees which strained the clearance resources of the responsible departments) are : (a) time required for site inspection and delineation of responsibility before the clearance work could be carried out; (b) the substantial volume of removal work beyond the normal capacity of certain departments; and (c) technical difficulties for removal work at some spots<sup>8</sup>.

10. With the benefit of the experience in the post-MANGKHUT clearance, we will adopt the following measures to better facilitate post-super typhoon clearance work in future:

- (a) The ECS will continue to be deployed for the initial phase of the post-super typhoon clearance work to facilitate the clearance of major thoroughfares, which may also be suitably extended to cover the clearance of secondary roads on a need basis if so decided by the Steering Committee. The time for the ECS to stand down for transition into the next phase of the recovery work will also be decided by the Steering Committee;
- (b) After the critical phase of the recovery work, relevant departments would continue to handle the work under their respective responsibility according to the established mechanism which will be speeded up through more flexible and effective use of spare contractor resources from works departments, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. District Offices will monitor district reaction and comments of DCs on outstanding clearance work within their respective district, refer cases reported to them to relevant departments in the first instance, and the relevant departments will keep track of the clearance work required for reporting to the DCs and the Steering Committee; and
- (c) to better cope with the possibility of handling a substantial number of fallen trees and allow for more speedy clearance in future, relevant clearance departments have also provided enhanced training to their staff and procured additional equipment (e.g.

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<sup>8</sup> Common technical difficulties encountered during the course of the clearance work included the requirements of implementing temporary traffic measures particularly on expressways; lack of vehicular access to the tree falling spots; and the restrained use of mechanical plant due to site limitations.

chainsaw) to better prepare for future super typhoons. For instance, LCSD will enhance tree management training, equipment and skill upgrading, particularly in tree inspection and the use of chainsaws; works departments will also establish understanding with their contractors to mobilise more manpower and equipment to assist in clearance and recovery works in emergency situations; and DEVB has since April 2019 increased the provision of training on the safe use of chainsaw for some 200 relevant staff members.

11. Tree and debris clearance work aside, at district level, inevitably there will be varying degree and quantities of public facilities damaged by future super typhoons that affect different walks of life (e.g. public escalators/lifts leading to public facilities). To facilitate the community to resume the normal daily lives as soon as practicable, prioritisation, coordination, implementation and progress monitoring of the relevant repair works will be of paramount importance. In this regard, the Steering Committee, with information to be provided by district teams of relevant departments as well as observations tendered by District Offices about the situation in the districts, will also be an effective platform to ensure that the recovery demands on damaged public facilities at district level can be addressed in a timely manner.