
CHAPTER 9

Roles and Responsibilities of Departments and Agencies

9.1 We have, in Chapters 4 - 7, described the broad operation of our emergency response system. In so doing, we have limited our detailed description of responsibilities to only a few Government departments for the sake of simplicity. In reality, the number of departments and agencies involved may be very large.

9.2 Annex 9.1 provides a comprehensive description of the main tasks of Government departments that have prescribed roles during emergencies. Annex 9.2 lists the main non-Government agencies that may need to coordinate their emergency response efforts with the Government.



Annex 9.1**Roles and Responsibilities of Departments and Agencies****Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department**

1. The Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation will be responsible for assessing the extent of loss or damage to agriculture and fishery undertakings, and for taking necessary relief measures. The Department also provides emergency crews to assist with the removal of trees which may have blocked roads or become dangerous within their areas of responsibility during a disaster.

Architectural Services Department

2. The Director of Architectural Services will be responsible for advising on the stability of damaged government buildings and facilities, and ex-government hospitals, and for carrying out the necessary emergency repairs. On request, the Director of Architectural Services is able to provide the same service for subvented hospitals and subvented schools.

Auxiliary Medical Service

3. The Chief Staff Officer, AMS, will be responsible for providing volunteers to give medical assistance to augment the services of the Department of Health, HA and FSD's ambulance services.

Buildings Department

4. The Director of Buildings will be responsible for the setting-up and operation of an emergency organisation to deal with reports concerning damaged buildings, building works, landslips and slopes which threaten private buildings.

Civil Aid Service

5. The Chief Staff Officer, CAS, will be responsible for deploying trained and disciplined volunteers to assist in operations such as search and rescue, crowd control, registration of victims, casualty handling, evacuation and feeding of disaster victims.

Civil Aviation Department

6. The Director of Civil Aviation is the Search Director in SAR operations for aircraft in distress. In case of an air crash involving a civil aircraft he is responsible for the preservation of wreckage, so that the accident can be investigated under the

Hong Kong Civil Aviation (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations. In case of a disaster, he may restrict air traffic or close the airport as required.

Civil Engineering and Development Department

7. The Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO), CEDD will be responsible for advising Government departments on potential dangers due to landslips and on measures to deal with landslips, for organising clearance work involving rocks, dangerous boulders, other occurrences where the use of explosives is required, and for answering requests for assistance in the saving of life, protection of property, and miscellaneous calls for action or assistance within the resources of his Department. The Head of the Civil Engineering Office (CEO), CEDD will be responsible for advising on the stability of damaged marine facilities and for organising necessary emergency repairs.

Drainage Services Department

8. The Director of Drainage Services is responsible for clearing and repairing blocked or damaged public sewers and storm-drains, including engineered sections of open channels, and major stream courses, and for ensuring the satisfactory operation of sewage treatment and flood prevention works.

Education Bureau

9. The Secretary for Education will decide whether, and if so, at what time, schools and kindergartens will be closed. In making a decision on school closure, the Director of Education will base on a set of pre-determined criteria and the supply of quality information from relevant sources.

Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

10. In close liaison with the utilities companies, the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services will be responsible for ensuring that, if electricity and piped gas supplies are interrupted during an emergency, these companies will, as quickly as practicable, carry out repair works to resume supplies. Upon request, the Department will also provide special equipment to assist other Government Departments with search and rescue operations.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

11. The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene will be responsible for providing staff to carry out the following duties, when required, during an emergency –

-
- a) removal of animal carcasses;
 - b) clearance of refuses from open/surface drains and choked gullies;
 - c) supply of temporary toilets and dustbins, collection of refuse and maintenance of hygiene in temporary and relief centres;
 - d) under the direction of Police, the recovery and removal of dead bodies, and assistance to the Director of Health to arrange for temporary extra mortuary facilities when required; and
 - e) clearance from roadsides in the urban area, where access is not restricted by drop gates, of dangerous or fallen trees after cutting by LCSD (LCSD is responsible for both cutting and clearing of trees in the New Territories).

Fire Services Department

12. The Director of Fire Services will be responsible for coordinating all rescue parties involved in extinguishing fires, protecting life and property in case of fire or other calamity, and emergency rescue work, which includes rendering assistance to people who appear to be in need of immediate medical attention.

Government Flying Service

13. The Controller, GFS, will be responsible for providing whatever flying services may be required for life-saving, fire-fighting, flying of relief supplies, aerial photography, surveillance, casualty evacuation and reconnaissance. Requests for helicopter support should generally be made to GFS by the Police Duty Officer of PHQCCC, in case of fire-fighting be directed from officers of FSCC, in case of Maritime Search and Rescue be directed from officers of MRCC of Marine Department and in case of aircraft-related accidents be directed by officers of Civil Aviation Department.

Government Logistics Department

14. The Director of Government Logistics is responsible for the provision of emergency transport support. A control centre will be set up in his Hong Kong Transport Pool to co-ordinate the deployment of pool vehicles.

15. The Director of Government Logistics is also responsible for supplying emergency items (e.g. blankets, sandbags, disinfectant) from its central warehouse at the Government Logistics Centre, and for arranging the urgent purchase of non-standard items. The Department will secure emergency vehicles from GLTA to deliver these items to user departments if departmental transport is unavailable.

Department of Health

16. The Director of Health will receive casualties with minor injuries in Accident & Emergency Units and Clinics, if a major disaster overloads the capabilities of the Accident & Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority. The Director of Health will also provide a physicist at a disaster site, if radioactive substances are involved. If required, the Director of Health, with assistance from Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, will arrange for temporary extra mortuary facilities, and for the carrying out of autopsies.

Highways Department

17. The Director of Highways will be responsible for clearing and repairing blocked or damaged public roads, removing dangerous and fallen boulders and dealing with landslips on Government land which has not been allocated to any department for maintenance, answering requests for assistance in the saving of life, protection of property and miscellaneous calls for action or assistance within the resources of his Department, and for coordinating repairs to utilities during emergencies. The Department is also responsible for keeping TD informed of the progress of road repair and clearing work at regular intervals, to enable TD to coordinate and develop transport arrangements as necessary.

Home Affairs Department

18. The Director of Home Affairs will be the “Disaster Relief Coordinator”, working through the headquarters emergency control centre and the District Officers. The District Officers will coordinate disaster relief efforts at the local level, in cooperation with Social Welfare Department, Housing Department and others as necessary, and will act as the local spokesman for central Government. DOs of the HAD will be responsible for coordinating emergency relief work in their districts and for reporting to their headquarters on the local situation, they will also be responsible for setting up help desks at the scene, or at other suitable locations. Each District Office will set up a DECC with 24-hour manning. The Public Enquiry Service Section of HAD Headquarters will be manned 24 hours a day to answer public enquiries of a non-technical nature. When required, staff of HAD HQ will open an ECC which will act as a channel of communication with the ECCs in District Offices, provide overall emergency relief coordination as necessary and provide a link with the EMSC. HAD shall arrange for community centres / halls to be available to evacuees and other displaced persons when and where necessary. They will coordinate Government’s efforts to help victims of disasters to liaise with Government Departments for help.

Hong Kong Observatory

19. The Director of the Hong Kong Observatory will be responsible for issuing all weather-related warnings and general precautionary announcements to the public and for providing meteorological advice to other departments/agencies.

Hong Kong Police Force

20. The Commissioner of Police is responsible for the co-ordination of all agencies at the scene of a disaster, except rescue agencies which will be coordinated by the Director of Fire Services, until such time as the site is handed over to its lawful owners or other appropriate authority. Specific responsibilities include -

- a) the preservation and security of the disaster site;
- b) the control of traffic to and from the scene with particular attention to facilitating unimpeded movement of emergency vehicles and casualty evacuation;
- c) the collection, collation and dissemination of casualty data by activation of the Casualty Enquiry Unit at PHQCCC, the Disaster Victim Identification Unit and the Casualty Documentation Teams;
- d) conducting an investigation into the cause of the disaster where there is evidence of a criminal offence or where the cause is unknown; an investigation may also be conducted on the direction of the Coroner;
- e) the activation of PHQCCC to co-ordinate the overall Police response to the disaster and to facilitate liaison with all other Government Departments involved in the disaster response including EMSC, FSD, HA, HAD, GS and TD; and
- f) the dissemination of information on all police related matters pertaining to the disaster, through the Police Public Relations Branch.

Hospital Authority

21. The Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (HA) will be responsible for providing emergency medical services during an emergency. If the situation warrants, and on the request of FSD, the HA will send a Medical Control Officer and Medical Team(s) to provide on-site triage of casualties, and emergency medical treatment. The HA will also provide medical advice on the casualty evacuation plan.

Housing Department

22. The Director of Housing, in conjunction with the relevant District Officer(s) of HAD and the Director of Social Welfare, will be responsible for providing emergency accommodation for victims made homeless.

Information Services Department

23. The ISD will be responsible for coordinating Government's information dissemination to the media. It will promptly issue advisory warnings, special announcements, regular situation reports and related information to the public through the media. It should also pass on such information to Government Departments including SBDO / EMSC and PHQCCC. ISD will liaise, through its Combined Information Centre, with departments having key front-line roles in a disaster. ISD liaison officers will advise the DO who is the spokesman for central Government at the local level, on media briefings at the scene of a disaster. They will also advise departments and central Government on public relations activities that may need to be taken to improve the corporate image of Government in its handling of disasters.

Lands Department

24. District Lands Officers of the New Territories will be responsible to the DECCs of HAD NT District Offices for locating areas affected by a disaster, and for making first-hand ground situation reports to the DECCs at the District Offices. They will assist in providing land status reports on the disaster area to relevant Government Departments having a duty to take follow-up action in the aftermath of the disaster. The Director of Lands (Survey and Mapping Office) is responsible for supplying mapping data and supplying aerial photography in conjunction with GFS of the disaster area. He will also provide topographical surveys after the disaster.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

25. The Director of Leisure and Cultural Services will be responsible for providing staff, when required during an emergency, for cutting dangerous or fallen trees within the urban areas. In the New Territories, the Director will also be responsible for the cutting and clearance of dangerous or fallen trees affecting public roads not within recreation sites maintained by the AFCD.

Marine Department

26. The Director of Marine is the designated Search Director for SAR operations involving vessels in distress in Hong Kong waters and within the Hong Kong Maritime SAR Region. He is responsible for control and, if necessary, closure of the port, if required during a disaster.

Office of the Telecommunications Authority

27. The Director-General of Telecommunications will be responsible for promptly relaying the possible Telecommunication Network Congestion Warning to the telecommunication network operators upon receipt of notification of a disaster or major emergency, and will monitor any disruption to any of their services and effect quick repair.

Security Bureau

28. Security Bureau (SB) co-ordinates the planning of Government's overall response to major emergencies through the ESU and EMSC system. SB provides the link and first point of contact between the rest of Chief Executive's Office (CEO) and the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS). SB is responsible for keeping CEO and the CS informed about the development of events, Government's overall response and the community's reaction to the events. The Emergency Support Unit of SB maintains the EMSC, manages the SBDO system and manages central Government contingency plans and resources.

Social Welfare Department

29. The Director of Social Welfare, in conjunction with the relevant District Officer(s) of HAD and the Director of Housing, will be responsible for providing food, blankets and other emergency items when victims of a disaster are found to be in need. The Department has three emergency relief duty teams in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories respectively, which can be deployed in an emergency. Each of these teams is headed by a Duty Officer (Emergency Relief) who can be contacted through PHQCCC, and who should comply with the Police's requests as far as possible.

30. The Director of Social Welfare will decide whether, and if so, at what time, facilities under their area of responsibility will be closed, and to advise parents and those taking care of the disabled and elderly not to take children, disabled or the elderly to their centres.

Transport Department

31. The Commissioner for Transport will be responsible for coordinating public transport through close liaison with the respective transport operators and in consultation with other departments to develop traffic and transport contingency plans. The Department will also be responsible for alerting and liaising with public transport operators and tunnel and bridge operators and mitigating the effects of traffic and transport problems, and activating the Transport Department Emergency Transport Coordination Centre to provide support to EMSC when required.

Development Bureau (DEVB)

32. Secretary for Development (SDEV) will be responsible for co-ordination of emergency/remedial operations of Drainage Services Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department, Buildings Department, Water Supplies Department and other relevant departments (such as Highways Department and Housing Department etc). If necessary he will provide a Liaison Officer to EMSC to be the DEVB Liaison Officer, who will liaise with the relevant departments and to provide necessary advice to EMSC.

Annex 9.2**Responsibilities of Non-Government Organisations**

1. The following organisations will be responsible for transmitting or broadcasting information on precautionary measures to their customers, clients and members of the public, in consultation with and on the advice of the relevant Government Departments. They should also inform ISD and the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) of any disruption to any of their services -

- A. ATV
- B. Commercial Radio
- C. Hong Kong Telecom
- D. Hutchison Communications
- E. Metro News Radio
- F. New T&T Hong Kong
- G. New World Telephone Co Ltd
- H. Radio Television Hong Kong
- I. TVB
- J. Wharf Cable Ltd

2. The following organisations will be responsible for keeping the Marine Department fully informed of any disruption to their operations during a disaster -

- A. Asia Terminals Co Ltd
- B. COSCO - HIT Terminals (HK) Ltd
- C. Hong Kong International Terminals Ltd
- D. Hong Kong Pilots Associations Ltd
- E. Hong Kong United Dockyards Ltd
- F. Kowloon Wharf Terminal & Warehouse Ltd
- G. Modern Terminals Ltd
- H. Sealand Orient Terminals Ltd

3. The following organisations will be responsible for advising the TD Duty Officer, or its Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre, when activated, and central Government, of any likely disruptions to the provision of their public transport services due to a disaster -

- A. All tunnels management companies/agencies
- B. Citybus Ltd
- C. Discovery Bay Transportation Services Ltd
- D. Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Ltd
- E. Hong Kong & Yaumati Ferry Co Ltd
- F. Hongkong Tramways Co Ltd
- G. Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation
- H. Kowloon Motor Bus Co (1933) Ltd
- I. Long Win Bus Co Ltd
- J. Mass Transit Railway Corporation
- K. New Lantao Bus Co Ltd
- L. New World First Bus Services Ltd
- M. Star Ferry Co Ltd
- N. Tsing Ma Management Ltd.

4. The following organisations will be responsible for advising the Marine Department of any disruptions to their services resulting from a disaster –

Companies Operating Ferries between Hong Kong, The Mainland and Macau

5. The following companies will be responsible for informing the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Fire Services Department and central Government of any disruption to services, and for making safe, and effecting prompt repairs to, their supply lines and station -

- A. China Light & Power Co Ltd
- B. Hong Kong Electric Co Ltd
- C. Hong Kong & China Gas Co Ltd