

# THE STANDING CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL & NUCLEAR PLANNING GROUP (SRPG)

## INTRODUCTION

A Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) agent attack by either a terrorist or a criminal group would undoubtedly cause widespread panic and fear in the civil population. This is why they are often perceived as the ultimate weapons of terror. As a result, a number of terrorist groups have stated the intent to undertake such attacks, knowing that a single successful attack would enhance their ability to coerce those they oppose more than a multitude of conventional bombings. The psychological impact on both the population and the economy of any state subjected to a CBRN attack would be severe, thus all Governments must actively seek to deter, prevent and minimise the consequences of such attacks.

The Government of the HKSAR is committed to providing an effective and efficient response to the use, threatened use, or possible use of CBRN weapons/agents for terrorist or criminal purposes. In 1998, ten government experts in Hong Kong formed a Think Tank to consider the problem of a terrorist CBRN attack. In 2003, this group became the Standing Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Planning Group (SRPG).

## THE ROLE OF THE SRPG

Under the authority of the Secretary for Security, the SRPG meets regularly to strategically plan and prepare Government contingency response for CBRN attack. The SRPG will provide advice to government departments and related non-government organisations on all matters relating to CBRN attacks. The group is chaired by the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and comprises representatives from Fire Services Department (FSD), Civil Aid Service (CAS), Department of Health (DH), Government Laboratory (GL), Hospital Authority (HA), Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) and Security Bureau (SB). Ad hoc members and specialists from other departments and agencies are also invited to attend meetings within their subject areas as necessary.



HKPF at scene confirm the incident is a CBRN attack. RIAG simultaneously forms up.



FSD rescue victims.



HKPF cordon and control the contaminated zone.



FSD conduct triage and decontaminate casualties at scene.



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China



In addition to its role of contingency planning for response to CBRN attacks, the SRPG also advises on, and co-ordinates, government CBRN exercises. Small scale CBRN training sessions and exercises are run regularly by individual department and agency, with a full-scale inter-departmental exercise undertaken annually. These exercises have proved invaluable. Not only do the participants gain practical experience, but the SRPG are also able to test and refine procedures under realistic conditions.

## **THE CBRN INCIDENT ADVISORY GROUP**

The CBRN Incident Advisory Group (RIAG) is the operational arm of the SRPG. RIAG is on call 24 hours a day and is formed via telephone conference in the earliest stages of a CBRN attack. Membership comprises of experts, drawn from the SRPG, representing the key players in a CBRN response. These are HKPF, FSD, HA, DH and SB. The role of RIAG is to: -

- a) Make the initial threat assessment for a CBRN attack;
- b) Advise agencies on the appropriate level of response;
- c) Provide initial advice to commanders on the ground regarding the size of the contaminated area and downwind hazard. On their arrival at the incident, Hong Kong Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal operators then confirm or adjust this area in light of actual conditions;
- d) Monitor the incident as it evolves and recommend any necessary adjustment to the response;
- e) Enhance direct communication between the key players in the CBRN response;
- f) Provide technical and operational advice to the HKPF, FSD and to other agencies involved in the response; and
- g) Provide technical and operational advice to the Chief Executive, the Chief Executive Security Committee and the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre.



A portable weather station is used at scene by HKO to assess downwind conditions.



HKPF Bomb Disposal Officer render safe and package the device to prevent further emissions.



Hospitals prepare to receive casualties, some of whom may be contaminated.



FSD carry out area decontamination. HKPF restore normality and conduct criminal investigation.



Chemical agent sample goes to GL for analysis. DH laboratory would analyse radiological or biological samples.



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