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**Emergency Response Operations
Outside the Hong Kong SAR**

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Emergency Response Operations Outside the Hong Kong SAR

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAHK	Airport Authority Hong Kong
AMS	Auxiliary Medical Service
AHU	Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (Immigration Department)
BL	Basic Law
BJO	Office of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in Beijing
C&ED	Customs and Excise Department
CAS	Civil Aid Service
CDCM	Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Mission
CE	Chief Executive
CESC	Chief Executive's Security Committee
CMAB	Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
CIC	Combined Information Centre (Information Services Department)
CS	Chief Secretary for Administration
D of Adm	Director of Administration (Chief Secretary for Administration's Office)
DH	Department of Health
DS	Deputy Secretary
EROOHK	Emergency Response Operations Outside Hong Kong
ECT	Emergency Coordination Team
EMSC	Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre
ERT	Emergency Response Team
ETO	Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices
FEHD	Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
ESU	Emergency Support Unit (Security Bureau)
FHB	Food and Health Bureau
FSD	Fire Services Department
GFS	Government Flying Service
HA	Hospital Authority
HAD	Home Affairs Department
HKETCO	Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan)
HKETO	Hong Kong Economic & Trade Office
HKPF	Hong Kong Police Force
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
IET	Initial Evaluation Team
ImmD	Immigration Department
ISD	Information Services Department
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OCMFA	Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in HKSAR

OTA	Outbound Travel Alert
PAS	Principal Assistant Secretary
PRC	The People's Republic of China
PS for S	Permanent Secretary for Security
ROTI	Registration of Outbound Travel Information
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SB	Security Bureau
S for S	Secretary for Security
SWD	Social Welfare Department
TC	Tourism Commission
THB	Transport and Housing Bureau
TIC	Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong

Emergency Response Operations Outside the Hong Kong SAR

1. CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Significant emergencies or disasters and other sudden incidents occurring outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) can kill, injure or otherwise seriously affect the personal safety of Hong Kong residents (hereafter referred to as “residents”) caught within their areas of influence. In order to provide effective assistance and support to the residents under these circumstances, the HKSAR Government (hereafter referred to as “the Government”) stands ready to implement suitable contingency measures such as special arrangements to bring back the residents stranded outside Hong Kong and the deployment of emergency response to offer assistance to the residents in the affected areas.

1.2 The calamities can be natural in origin, such as earthquakes, floods, tidal waves, storms, landslides or fires, or can be man-made, involving aircraft, ship, train, or bus accidents, collapsed buildings or industrial incidents. They may even involve infectious diseases, criminal events such as terrorist bombings, aircraft hijacking, civil unrest or involvement of the residents in zones of conflict.

1.3 While this contingency plan primarily focuses upon the provision of assistance to the residents caught in distress in emergencies outside the HKSAR, it is relevant to note that the Government also provides information on travel risk to the residents through the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System. For details of the OTA, please see **Annex 1.1**.

1.4 Depending on the type and extent of the external emergency and the particular circumstances of each case, the Government’s response may simply take the form of contribution to international aid, without resorting to physical contingency measures or deployment of personnel. However, where a large

number of residents are killed, injured or otherwise affected, the physical deployment of emergency response personnel is likely to be required.

1.5 Emergency assistance may also need to go beyond the immediate needs of just the residents outside the Hong Kong SAR. As a modern affluent society, Hong Kong has a moral obligation to assist those less fortunate or those who are in distress. In addition, the need to provide assistance from the point of view of the wider interests of Hong Kong cannot be ignored.

Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System

The Government provides information on travel risk to the residents through the OTA System.

2. When there are signs of threat in a place that may affect the personal safety of the residents, Security Bureau (SB) will assess and consider the need to issue an OTA, taking into account factors such as the nature, level and duration of the threat. Should there be public health reasons, based on the alert level as advised by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), SB will issue an OTA on countries/territories seriously affected by infectious diseases to help the public better understand the possible health risks.

3. Three colour alerts to signify different levels of risk to personal safety are issued under the OTA:

	Amber	Red	Black
Level of Threat	Signs of threat	Significant threat	Severe threat
Key Message To Public	Monitor situation; exercise caution	Adjust travel plans; avoid non-essential travel	Avoid all travel

4. The updates on OTA will be promulgated through press releases, the OTA webpage [www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota / www.sb.gov.hk/chi/ota] and the SB Mobile App [Safeguard HK]. Residents who register with the “Registration of Outbound Travel Information (ROTI)” will also receive updates on OTA and related public information via “My Messages” of MyGovHK and, depending on the situation, SMS to their Hong Kong or overseas mobile phone if their registered destination is covered by the OTA System. The OTA and related public information will also be sent to their email addresses if they have agreed to receive email messages in “My Settings” at MyGovHK. The webpages of the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Information Services Department

(ISD), the Tourism Commission (TC), the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), and the Travel Health Service of the Department of Health (DH) all have hyperlinks to the OTA webpage.

5. The OTA webpage also provides hyperlink to the webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China on travel safety. It also provides access to the travel information webpages of the Australian, Canadian and the United Kingdom governments which contain comprehensive databases of travel risks to other countries around the world.

6. Residents have freedom to travel and to enter or leave HK. Residents are encouraged to make reference to the OTA but it remains a resident's personal decision whether he/she chooses to continue the journey and travel abroad. The Government will not infringe the right of residents or restrain their outbound travelling. Instead, the Government aims to facilitate a resident's decision by providing, on best endeavour basis and through the OTA System, up-to-date information on the risk (if any) posed to the personal safety of the residents in the relevant place. The Government accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury arising from any cause or related to the supply or use of the OTA or other information on the OTA webpage.

7. As part of the overall contingency plan to assist the residents, the Government may make special arrangements with the airlines, for seats on commercial flights to be reserved (hereafter referred to as "reserved seats") or special flights to be chartered (hereafter referred to as "chartered flights"), to ensure priority and organized return arrangements for the residents in need of the special assistance. Where necessary, the Government may also seek assistance from the Mainland authorities to make use of Mainland's chartered flights, to bring back the residents expeditiously.

8. There is no direct or automatic linkage between a particular level of the OTA and possible arrangements for, say "reserved seats" or "chartered flights". The latter depends on availability of commercial flight operations, relevant airlines' assistance, and the number of residents requiring special assistance and the circumstances they are facing. The OTA, however, serves to provide an

appropriate alert to the residents, based on the risk assessment that a particular place may present to the personal safety of the residents there.

2. CHAPTER 2

DEFINITION

2.1 Throughout this plan, the term emergency is used to denote emergencies and disasters occurring outside the boundaries of the HKSAR.

OBJECTIVES

2.2 The Government's policy on response operations during an emergency is to provide a fast, focused, properly resourced and effective response:

- (a) to the residents who are in distress and caught within the areas of the emergency; or
- (b) to people or areas which the Chief Executive (CE) deems in the interests of Hong Kong should be provided with aid and assistance.

OVERVIEW OF RESPONSE

Three Tier Response System

2.3 Where the well-being and personal safety of residents are at risk or actually jeopardised in an emergency, the concept of this contingency plan is for the Government to engage in suitable emergency response measures commensurate with the level of threat and circumstances in order to provide necessary assistance to the residents involved. This will be achieved by means of a "Three Tier Response System" and for the purpose of determining the appropriate response level, the relevant factors to be taken into consideration include:

- (a) the estimated number of the residents affected and/or the number of the residents seeking assistance;
- (b) the extent and seriousness of any injuries or harm suffered, or likely to be suffered by the residents involved;

- (c) the extent of urgent resources required and bureaux and departments that need to be involved in order to provide the required effective emergency response;
- (d) the level of decisions and coordination required to effectively deal with the situation; and/or
- (e) the scale of the resources required to be mobilised for the emergency response operation.

2.4 It must be emphasized, however, that the OTA System, which serves to provide travel risk information in order that the residents may take appropriate precautionary measures or to reconsider their travelling to the destination as mentioned in paragraph 1.3 and **Annex 1.1**, has no direct bearing on the Emergency Response Operations Outside the Hong Kong (EROOHK) Three Tier Response System, which primarily focuses upon providing actual assistance to the residents caught in distress outside Hong Kong in the area affected by the emergency.

2.5 **EROOHK Tier ONE** is for relatively minor or isolated cases involving insignificant threat to or impact on personal safety, and where the assistance sought by the residents outside the HKSAR can be handled solely by ImmD. Under such circumstances, the **Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU)** of the ImmD will arrange for the provision of suitable assistance to the relevant residents such as record checks, ascertaining identities and status, and urgent issue of travel documents etc, through the local Chinese Diplomatic and Consular Missions (CDCMs), Immigration Divisions of the Mainland Offices of the Government of the HKSAR or the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan) (HKETCO).

2.6 Where the significance to and/or the impact on the residents are growing in terms of the number affected, the threat to life and personal safety or the seriousness of the injuries/harm suffered, and which may require more complex emergency response measures/operations through multi-departmental efforts, SB may escalate the incident to be treated as **EROOHK Tier TWO** and take over to coordinate emergency response. If necessary, SB will activate the Emergency Coordination Team (ECT) comprising representatives of key departments concerned. The ECT will determine measures commensurate

with the level of threat and circumstances in order to provide necessary assistance to the residents. Furthermore, the option of deploying Immigration officers to the relevant place for direct liaison with CDCM or supporting HKETCO, obtaining on-scene information and providing support to the residents will also be considered.

2.7 **EROOHK Tier THREE** is when the situation of the emergency has worsened to such an extent that the threat to personal safety and significance to or impact on the residents are evident or imminent and in a widespread manner, or where a large number of residents are killed, injured, or otherwise affected, thus requiring the provision of direct assistance at the scene of incident by the Government. Under these circumstances, a team of Government officials may be despatched to the area to achieve the purpose. Likewise, where few residents are involved the Government may still decide to deploy such a team in order to offer humanitarian assistance.

2.8 Where it is considered that physical deployment of Government officials is warranted, the Government may in the first instance send a small **Initial Evaluation Team (IET)** to assess the situation and provide an accurate analysis of the on-scene situation in order that an effective response can be determined.

2.9 In order to do this, relevant bureaux and departments will prepare core teams in the functional areas for the formation of the **Emergency Response Team (ERT)** in the areas of search and rescue of victims and recovery of deceased victims, victim identification, casualty enquiry, medical assistance or support, immigration documentation, psychological support and care, logistic support and relief operations.

2.10 This response plan will further pre-designate relevant departments and other agencies involved in providing assistance from home base (Hong Kong) e.g. Home Affairs Department (HAD), which will set up reception desks at the airport or other points of entry where the residents will be returning.

3. CHAPTER 3

ALERTING, ACTIVATION and RESPONSE

3.1 For day-to-day minor incidents and isolated requests for assistance, the AHU is responsible for responding to calls made by the residents abroad to the 24 hour ImmD hotline (1868). Residents on the Mainland may request assistance from the AHU or the Immigration Divisions of the Mainland Offices of the Government of the HKSAR.

3.2 For an emergency, the three main organizations involved in the alerting and notification mechanism are the ISD, responsible for monitoring media reports on major incidents occurring around the world, the AHU and the SB.

3.3 When an emergency has occurred outside Hong Kong, ISD will, according to its own standard procedures, inform designated key officials in the first instance. Where the event is **likely to affect residents in its vicinity or which reportedly involves residents being killed or injured**, the ISD Duty Officer will inform AHU and SB. Likewise, if the number of calls received by the ImmD hotline indicates that the residents are affected or have suffered injury or death, AHU will inform ISD and SB.

3.4 Upon notification, SB will assess the significance of the incident to or impact on the residents and determine the appropriate level of response. SB will, with the assistance from AHU, closely monitor the development of the incident and adjust the level of response accordingly.

EROOHK TIER ONE

3.5 For relatively minor and isolated cases involving insignificant threat to or impact on personal safety, and where the assistance sought by the residents outside HKSAR can be handled solely by ImmD, AHU will treat the incident as an **EROOHK Tier ONE** incident and provide assistance to the residents as part of the normal response procedures. During the process, AHU will maintain close liaison with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of People's Republic of China in HKSAR (OCMFA) and CDCMs. This system is similar to the consular protection system of other Governments, with AHU serving as the home base and CDCMs as the execution arm. Should the situation warrant, assistance may be sought from respective Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (ETO) in overseas for assistance in making initial contact with the residents in distress, providing relevant information or assistance on basic necessities and other logistical arrangement as appropriate.

3.6 For incidents occurring on the Mainland, or in the Macao SAR or Taiwan, similar contact will be made with the Mainland authorities, the Macao SAR authorities and the relevant Taiwan organizations under established communication channels¹. The Immigration Divisions of the Mainland Offices of the Government of the HKSAR also provide assistance to the residents on the Mainland. HKETCO would provide practical assistance to the residents in Taiwan.

3.7 AHU will provide assessment on Cash Relief applications from victim(s) of serious injury and death or their family member in accident for HAD's approval.

3.8 AHU and the Mainland Offices of the Government of the HKSAR will keep SB abreast of the development at regular intervals. Depending on the nature and circumstances of the incident, SB may consider issuing early alerts to relevant bureaux and departments to prepare for the possible escalation of EROOHK response.

EROOHK TIER TWO

3.9 Where the significance to and/or the impact on the residents are growing in terms of the number affected, the threat to life and personal safety, or the seriousness of the injuries/harm suffered, and which may require more complex emergency response measures/operations through multi-departmental efforts, ImmD will make recommendation to SB for the latter's decision on escalating the incident to **EROOHK Tier TWO**, and in which case, the following actions will be taken:

¹ I.e. through the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau or HKETCO.

- (a) If necessary, SB will activate the ECT to oversee the handling of the incident. SB, ImmD, ISD, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) and the TC will be the standing members of the ECT. Other bureaux and departments, commercial operators or trade representatives will be invited to participate on a need basis;
- (b) The ECT will update the Chief Executive's Office and the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office if necessary;
- (c) AHU will continue to provide assistance to the residents in accordance with its normal response procedures. In consultation with SB, AHU will assess the feasibility and effectiveness of deploying Immigration officers to the relevant place so as to make direct liaison with CDCM and (if necessary) ETOs or support HKETCO, obtain on-scene information and provide support to the residents;
- (d) Special arrangements will be made to bring back the residents expeditiously if necessary. Depending on circumstances, it may include arranging "reserved seats", "chartered flights" or seeking assistance from the Mainland authorities to use Mainland's chartered flights; and
- (e) If circumstances indicate the likelihood of overseas deployment of rescue units, the Emergency Support Unit (ESU) of SB, being responsible for coordinating emergency response operations outside Hong Kong, will be alerted and involved in the ECT.

EROOHK TIER THREE

3.10 Where the situation has worsened to such an extent that the threat to personal safety and significance to or impact on the residents are evident and imminent and in a widespread manner, necessitating the physical deployment of emergency response to the area to provide direct assistance, ECT, in consultation with ESU, will recommend to the Secretary for Security (S for S) that the incident be treated as **EROOHK Tier THREE**.

3.11 The full range of response measures for EROOHK Tier THREE is laid down in Chapter 4 of this plan.

4. CHAPTER 4

EROOHK TIER THREE – RESPONSE STRATEGY

Strategy

4.1 The Government's overall strategy in dealing with such incidents is to make full use of a range of measures. These include:

- (a) the proper preparation, resourcing and training of the response services in order for them to respond to such incidents professionally, effectively, efficiently and safely in the functional areas of-
 - Urban search, rescue and recovery
 - Disaster victim identification
 - Casualty documentation and enquiry
 - Medical assistance and support
 - Immigration documentation
 - Psychological support and care
 - Logistical support
 - Relief operations management;
- (b) the formation of a small IET to provide an accurate analysis of the on-scene situation in order that an effective response can be determined;
- (c) the selection and formation of an appropriate tailor-made ERT with areas of expertise specifically selected from the functional areas shown above;
- (d) the formation of a policy and advisory body under the auspices of the Chief Executive's Security Committee (CESC) to advise the CE and issue policy directives;
- (e) the activation of the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) to provide an advisory and (where necessary) directive channel for the CE, Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) or the S for S, and the means to coordinate overall Government support to the operational departments;

- (f) the consideration of making special arrangements to bring back the residents expeditiously;
- (g) the effective management of media information to ensure that the Government's actions and objectives are understood and supported, and to keep the public fully informed;
- (h) the flexible deployment of means of communication (including but not limited to satellite phone, SMS, email, webpage, mobile apps notifications and social media platform) for effective dissemination of information and updates to the public;
- (i) the maintenance or establishment of close external communication with other affected Governments to facilitate exchange of information on the emergency. The establishment of such links should be made through, or with the agreement of, the OCMFA, or made under the coordination of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) if the matter concerns Taiwan; and
- (j) the application of different models of Early Psychological Intervention by relevant department(s) and/or agency (agencies) to cover pre-incident training, incident support services and post-incident follow-up services (as appropriate) for emergency workers and for the victims.

Alerting Procedures

4.2 Where an EROOHK Tier TWO response has been activated and the situation has worsened to such an extent that the threat to personal safety and significance to or impact upon residents are evident and imminent, and in a widespread manner, necessitating the physical deployment of emergency response to the area to provide direct assistance, the ECT, in consultation with ESU, will recommend to the S for S that the incident be treated as EROOHK Tier THREE. Alternatively, where a large number of residents are killed, injured or otherwise affected in an emergency (e.g. earthquake, serious fire etc), thereby requiring overseas deployment of rescue teams and Police Disaster Victim Identification Unit etc to areas outside the Hong Kong SAR, SB, when alerted by ImmD and ISD, may upon approval from the S for S, directly activate

the EROOHK Tier THREE response in the first instance.

4.3 Where an incident has occurred which is classified as EROOHK Tier THREE, EMSC will be activated upon the direction of the S for S or a designated senior SB official. The ECT will continue to oversee the handling of the incident until EMSC is in operation.

4.4 Regardless of the severity of the incident, CE, or under his/her authorization, the CS or S for S may personally activate the EROOHK Tier THREE response, if he/she considers it is necessary to provide assistance to the affected residents expeditiously.

4.5 S for S (or where unavailable, PS for S or a Deputy Secretary) will subsequently direct which Government officials, drawn from a list at **Annex 4.1**, are to be alerted.

Response Timeline

4.6 The expected response timeline for an external relief operation is as follows:

- the emergency occurs;
- the situation and its aftermath is monitored by ISD, AHU and SB;
- where appropriate, an EROOHK Tier THREE response is triggered;
- information is provided to the public in a timely manner, with clear indications of political leadership in directing the response;
- the IET is formed and dispatched;
- the ERT is formed and dispatched;
- response operations commence;
- where necessary, ERT personnel are relieved and replaced;
- response operations scale down and end; and
- the ERT withdraws.

Chief Executive's Security Committee (CESC)

4.7 In the event of an EROOHK Tier THREE situation, where necessary, the S for S, in consultation with the CS, will advise the CE to convene a meeting of the CESC.

4.8 This Committee chaired by the CE, or under his/her delegated authority by the CS, the S for S, or other Principal Officials, will be the CE's principal advisory body. Other officials may be co-opted to the Committee, as circumstances require.

4.9 The CESC's primary role will be to consider appropriate policy and oversee its implementation, to advise the CE on what measures should be adopted to deal with the situation and to manage the overall situation, and to approve and support operational initiatives.

4.10 When the CESC is not in formal session, the S for S, or the EMSC Controller will brief the CE and appropriate members, as required. The secretary to the CESC will be responsible for notifying members of meetings, providing secretariat support and maintaining a close liaison with the EMSC.

Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC)

4.11 The EMSC, when activated, represents the Government Secretariat on a 24-hour basis and will be manned in accordance with the EMSC Operational Instructions. Relevant departments will provide appropriate and suitably qualified officers as liaison officers to assist in the management of the incident.

4.12 The EMSC is the focal point of the Government's coordination effort and as such forms part of the CE's overall emergency response mechanism. During an emergency situation, in addition to its normal functions of monitoring and support, it exercises a coordinating function on behalf of the overall Government response.

4.13 The responsibilities of the EMSC are laid down in the EMSC Operational Instructions. In an emergency, its key functions, amongst other

things, are to:

- (a) obtain accurate and considered information on the situation and evaluate the operational and policy implications;
- (b) issue policy directives of the CE, CESC, CS or the S for S and clarify, advise and assist in their implementation; and
- (c) coordinate as necessary, and monitor the provision of support and assistance required by any ERT, and provide secretariat support for the CESC/Security Control Committee.

Security Bureau Emergency Support Unit (ESU)

4.14 The ESU is a unit within SB, staffed by professional-grade officers with extensive experience in law-enforcement, counter-terrorism, internal security, fire and rescue operations and in emergency management. The ESU maintains the EMSC, manages the Security Bureau Duty Officer system and is responsible for overseeing emergency response at the Government Secretariat level.

4.15 The ESU, when called upon, will assist the ECT in monitoring EROOHK Tier TWO incidents and advise the S for S to activate EROOHK Tier THREE incidents where necessary.

Command and Control

4.16 The overall responsibility for the handling of an emergency situation affecting the HKSAR lies with the CE. In making his/her decisions, the CE is advised by the CESC.

4.17 The EMSC will be activated upon the direction of the S for S or a designated senior SB official. The S for S will be required to ensure that the EMSC coordinates action being taken by other bureaux and departments and receives the cooperation of the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) that may be involved.

4.18 Information technology is widely adopted and integrated into

Government offices and their respective business activities. Bureaux and departments must ensure the proper functioning of their computer systems, office communication networks and any other electronic service delivery arrangements, which are vital to the efficient operation of their respective organizations.

Initial Evaluation Team and Emergency Response Team

4.19 Where a large number of residents have been killed, injured or otherwise directly affected by an incident, the following response will be activated, and the Government will select suitable emergency response personnel and deploy them in order to render assistance.

4.20 The exact response will vary depending on the type, extent and location of the incident that has occurred. In disaster or emergency situations, it is vital that an accurate analysis and assessment of the on-site situation is obtained, so that a proper and effective response can be determined. In order to fulfil this requirement, an IET will quickly be deployed to the scene of the incident before any larger response team is deployed. The IET may be formed by staff of one or more of the following departments:

- SB
- Fire Services Department (FSD)
- Civil Aid Service (CAS)
- Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)
- Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS)
- Hospital Authority (HA)
- Government Flying Service (GFS)
- ImmD
- Social Welfare Department (SWD)

4.21 The IET will be required to evaluate the prevailing situation, the immediate needs of the residents in the area and the conditions at the scene, such as the availability of shelter, food, transport and communications. This evaluation of the needs of the residents and of the infrastructure capability will allow decisions to be made in Hong Kong regarding the need for and the

sustainability of any larger deployment. Additionally, once on-site, the IET will provide a limited initial response capability.

4.22 Depending upon the advice received from the ESU, feedback received from the IET regarding the on-scene situation and infrastructure sustainability, as well as any information obtained from other sources, the S for S will then call for the formation of a tailor-made ERT with areas of expertise specifically selected from the functional areas of:

- Emergency management [SB]
- Urban search, rescue and recovery [FSD and CAS]
- Disaster victim identification [HKPF]
- Casualty documentation and enquiry [HKPF]
- Medical assistance and support [HA and AMS]
- Medical evacuation and support [HA, AMS and GFS]
- Immigration documentation [ImmD]
- Cash relief [ImmD and HAD]
- Psychological support and care [HA and SWD]
- On-site media coordination and response [ISD]
- Logistical support [CAS]

4.23 ESU will advise the S for S of the appropriate components required to effectively deal with a particular emergency. Departmental personnel will then be selected to suit the functional response areas required in order to deal with the particular event effectively.

4.24 Once a decision is made to deploy an ERT, the team leader must be given a clearly defined set of *aims and objectives*. These must be concise and straightforward and be reasonably achievable with the personnel selected and the equipment made available.

Response Overview

4.25 When formed, and authorized for deployment by the CE or by another Principal Official authorized to do so on his/her behalf, the ERT will be ready to conduct or, where operating under the auspices of any international effort or

joint effort with the Mainland, be prepared to assist in the following areas:

- (a) **Evacuation** - Large numbers of residents may be in the vicinity of the incident and may need to be evacuated if normal transport has been seriously affected or suspended. This may require international or joint evacuation or special evacuation using “reserved seats” or “chartered flights” or seeking assistance from the Mainland authorities to use Mainland’s chartered flights, or ships, or other assistance in accessing scheduled flights or other transport still operating. All will require the formation of help and support groups based at the airports, ports or other transportation hubs being used for the evacuation and any additional locations where the evacuees are deposited.
- (b) **Urban Search and Rescue** - The affected area may require additional search and rescue assistance. Such assistance should only be deployed at the express request or permission of the host country. If deployed, this type of assistance is highly specialized, requires quantities of specialist equipment and will have to be integrated into any overall rescue effort or international response being coordinated by the host country.
- (c) **Search and Recovery** - The affected area may require additional assistance in the search for and recovery of dead bodies. Such assistance should only be deployed at the express request or permission of the host country. It is a highly specialized response requiring specialist equipment and must be integrated into the overall rescue operation.
- (d) **Victim Identification** - The affected area may require additional assistance in the process of identification of victims, using visual identification at the scene by relatives or friends, photographic identification, fingerprint identification, or DNA identification techniques. This process is difficult to conduct due to lack of jurisdiction or authority in a host country. However integration into an international response effort (such as that used in Luxor, Egypt during the hot-air-balloon tragedy in February 2013) is possible.

- (e) **Casualty Enquiry/Missing Person Enquiries** - This refers to enquiries or assisting in the conduct of enquiries relating to missing persons and general identification. Such assistance should only be deployed at the express request or permission of the host country.
- (f) **Assistance to Family Members/Relatives** - Family members/relatives of the dead, the injured and the missing are likely to be present on-site in order to search for and care for them. Support (including crisis intervention and early psychological intervention) for and assistance to these people will be required.
- (g) **Medical Assistance** - The provision of medical assistance to the affected area may be required. Again this is likely to have to be incorporated in the overall rescue operation or international relief effort. In addition, the team should have its own medical support.
- (h) **Immigration Documentation/Assistance** - A number of residents are likely to have lost their documentation during the emergency and will be unable to travel. The provision of replacement/temporary documentation is essential to their ability to get home. The use of ImmD records will assist in determining who may be in need of assistance.
- (i) **Financial Assistance** - Residents who have lost all their possessions during the emergency may require temporary financial assistance. They may require Government's help in obtaining tickets in order to leave the area. Those who are arriving to search for their missing family members/relatives may likewise require financial help. Injured residents may require financial assistance for settling the hospital and medical fees.
- (j) **Medical Repatriation** - Where there are injured residents, suitable arrangements may have to be made for their medical evacuation back to Hong Kong and for their transportation from point of entry (usually the airport) to a suitable HA facility.

- (k) **Victim Repatriation/Disposal** - Arrangements will have to be made for the repatriation to Hong Kong of the deceased, and provision may have to be made for assistance in their proper disposal in Hong Kong (e.g. obtaining the Permit to Import Human Corpse). Where for health reasons interment or cremation occurs in the host country, assistance will have to be provided for families present.
- (l) **Security** - There may be circumstances where the provision of security advice at the scene of an evacuation operation or in general circumstances for the Hong Kong team may be necessary.
- (m) **Logistics Support** - During an extreme event, any team deployed to a disaster area may have to be fully self sufficient in terms of finance, shelter and accommodation, food, water supplies and communications. Provision will have to be made for the possibility of operations having to take place in extreme situations.

TEAM REQUIREMENTS

The team itself will have needs that must be satisfied before it can operate effectively to assist others. Areas requiring special attention are:

Initial Evaluation Team and Emergency Response Team

4.26 The IET and ERT should be dispatched to the area timely to evaluate the situation and the immediate needs of residents caught up in the event, and provide necessary assistance in areas mentioned in paragraph 4.25. The IET will evaluate the ability of the remaining infrastructure to absorb a larger response and the assistance required. Safety and security, availability of shelter and accommodation, food and water supplies, transportation and communications will have to be considered before ERT can be deployed.

Equipment

4.27 Specialist teams selected for the response will take all equipment

necessary with them. The team as a whole should have the capability of being totally self-contained and self-sufficient if the particular situation warrants this approach. In addition to the specialised technical equipment already mentioned, other supplies and equipment may include water, a means of water purification, food, shelter, telephones (mobile and satellite), localized radios, fax machines, computers, printers, medicines and protective clothing, etc.

Health and Safety

4.28 Arrangements will have to be made to ensure the health and safety of team members while operating in extreme environments. Accordingly, a small medical team may be included in the team composition to look after the team's medical needs.

Communications

4.29 Circumstances at the scene may require the setting up of a complete communications suite. Inter-team communications are vital especially when teams are working independently in separate locations. Communications with Hong Kong must be certain in order to permit a free flow of information back to the Government command apparatus. The need for welfare contact between team members and their families must also be catered for.

Team Management

4.30 A team located far away from base support and operating in an extremely stressful and hostile environment needs to be effectively managed and supported. The multi-departmental team should normally be led by SB (either at Deputy Secretary (DS) or Principal Assistant Secretary (PAS) level, or by a member of ESU).

Tactical Logistics

4.31 Logistics for a forward deployed team is vital for officers away from their home support base. Logistics will have to cover pick up at the arrival location, accommodation, feeding, recreation, home contact, in-country

transportation and repatriation. A similar setup to receive returning or rotating team members in Hong Kong will also be required.

Media Support

4.32 ISD media liaison officer(s) should accompany the team. He/she will assist the team leader in media related duties by: assessing media reports for immediate response or clarification; liaising with reporters in the field and keeping them informed of the work of the IET and ERT; organizing media briefings and interviews by the team leader; assuming the role of team spokesman where necessary and appropriate; and liaising with EMSC on the issue of press releases and responses to press enquiries.

Post Deployment Stress Support

4.33 Team members may have been subjected to harrowing sights and experiences beyond their normal experience. Upon return to Hong Kong, initial Post Deployment Stress Support should be mandatory in order to overcome any reluctance to seek assistance. Depending on the organisations to which the members belong, HA, SWD and NGOs may provide such support accordingly.

Allowances

4.34 Normal subsistence allowance will be provided for external duty. Where overtime is undertaken, at the discretion of individual heads of departments, officers may be recompensed with suitable time-off upon their return.

Interdepartmental Coordination and Liaison

4.35 All departments involved in emergency response will provide command, control, monitoring and support in their own areas of responsibility by operating their emergency coordination centres at appropriate levels. The EMSC will provide the overall monitoring capability necessary to give senior Government officials an understanding of the situation.

4.36 Proper management of a prolonged emergency situation requires effective communication at all levels of the Government response. The EMSC will operate a departmental liaison officer system to ensure an appropriate level of communication between the CE/CESC/EMSC and key departments.

4.37 Before the EMSC becomes operational, the ESU will play a proactive role in ensuring proper liaison between departments at appropriate levels.

4.38 When the EMSC is activated, liaison officers from involved bureaux and departments will be deployed. These officers will have detailed knowledge of their areas of responsibility, and will act, within the areas of their knowledge, as expert advisers to the EMSC. In addition, they are able to identify departmental information useful to the EMSC's work, and information being handled by the centre that is useful to their parent bureaux and departments.

4.39 Experience has shown that if the liaison officers are proactive, they function as an extremely useful channel of communication, maintaining a high degree of coordination between Government Secretariat and the emergency response agencies.

Preparation

4.40 Heads of designated departments will need to prepare and train teams of responders within the functional areas outlined in paragraph 4.1. Such teams will then be available for selection to form appropriate IET and ERT, tailor-made to deal with a specific emergency. Where departmental teams require specialist equipment (e.g. urban search and recovery equipment), the departments concerned will ensure that their personnel are properly equipped.

Clearance/Assistance for External Teams

4.41 CMAB will be required to contact Mainland authorities, Macao SAR authorities and the relevant Taiwan organizations, as appropriate, to assist in the deployment of IET and ERT to the Mainland, Macao SAR or Taiwan.

4.42 For emergencies occurring outside the People's Republic of China (PRC), SB will approach the OCMFA in Hong Kong for assistance in the following aspects, as necessary:

- (a) obtaining permission from the host country for IET and ERT to land and operate;
- (b) liaising with CDCMs in the affected areas to provide assistance to the IET and ERT; and
- (c) liaising with the host consulate in Hong Kong in order to expedite the arrival and operation of the team.

Control and Management

4.43 The CESC, the S for S or another Principal Official authorized by the CESC, will be responsible for the control and management of IET and ERT. This will be exercised on a day-to-day basis by the EMSC. The EMSC will be activated throughout any period of external deployment. Logistical and human resource management issues for the team will be managed through the EMSC.

Help Desks

4.44 In order to assist the residents in need, suitable help desks will be operated in the country or region affected, at any interim evacuation or transport point, and at the Hong Kong International Airport. Information obtained at the various help desks will where necessary be passed to the police casualty enquiry system to ensure that all pertinent information is available to any casualty enquiry process.

Call Centres

4.45 Departments with specific responsibilities for returning the residents will set up dedicated hotlines and telephone numbers to assist members of the public.

Private Sector Involvement

4.46 Consideration will be given to the inclusion of NGOs and other private sector organizations in any overall response. For an emergency, the input of the TIC will be useful. In some instances it may be expedient to outsource parts or even all of the Government's response to the private sector.

Officials who may need to be alerted on the instructions of the S for S

- Chief Secretary for Administration
- Financial Secretary
- Secretary for Justice
- Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
- Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
- Secretary for Development
- Secretary for Education
- Secretary for the Environment
- Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
- Secretary for Food and Health
- Secretary for Home Affairs
- Secretary for Transport and Housing
- Commissioner of Police
- Director of Fire Services
- Commissioner of Correctional Services
- Commissioner of Customs and Excise
- Controller of Government Flying Service
- Director of Immigration
- Director of Information Services
- Director of Social Welfare
- Commissioner for Efficiency (for 1823 hotline service)
- Chief Staff Officer, Auxiliary Medical Service
- Chief Staff Officer, Civil Aid Service

5. CHAPTER 5

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

5.1 The Government attaches great importance to communicating with its stakeholders, the public and the media, with a view to providing information to the public in a timely manner, outlining the development of any incident including the situation as it involves the residents caught in its aftermath, giving suitable advice for the residents and their families and publicizing the work, and achievements of any IET and ERT deployed outside of Hong Kong.

5.2 The most important task required is to provide accurate and timely information to the public. This information will be in one of two forms. It will be either:

- what the public needs to know, such as advice on areas to be avoided, details of those affected, travel advisories, emergency contact numbers and emergency arrangements; or
- major announcements and development of the situation which are of concern to the community.

5.3 The Government must work quickly and efficiently to provide the public with information. However the media with its more complex information gathering, verification and dissemination systems, will often be able to respond to news stories quicker than the Government. Nevertheless, for both forms of information, the Government has a responsibility to keep the public as up-to-date as possible.

5.4 The type of information demanded by the media and the public is very often not the same, or in the same form, as the information needed within the emergency response system. In order to allow the information management to function effectively as well as to provide information to the public as quickly as possible, there is a need for a separate but complementary public information dissemination channel during emergencies.

5.5 This separate channel operates through the ISD. ISD liaison officers if deployed with an ERT will coordinate on-site assistance to the media, and the

Combined Information Centre (CIC) will handle both the response to general media inquiries and the dissemination of other information.

5.6 Experience has shown that any external deployment will attract intense on-scene media interest from the Hong Kong media. The IET and ERT team leader will ensure that all efforts are made to ensure that the IET and ERT facilitates reasonable media access to their operations.

5.7 It is essential that all bureaux and departments understand the importance of assisting the ISD in its information dissemination role. Although this assistance should not be allowed to interfere with the operation of an IET and ERT, bureaux and departments must factor the need to provide assistance into the way that the respond is unified.

5.8 An emergency deployment will attract intense community, local and international media interest. The EMSC will liaise closely with the ISD to keep the public informed, through the media, of major incidents, the Government's response, and the progress of the operations. The ISD will co-ordinate the release of information to the public in accordance with its departmental standing instructions, which should be familiar to all departmental officers who may be involved in providing assistance to ISD officers. The EMSC will not play a direct role in the information dissemination task unless specifically directed to do so. The EMSC will assist to ensure that the ISD is updated on the latest situation of incidents and departmental response; the ISD will disseminate the necessary information to the public in a timely and effective manner.

5.9 Similarly, the EMSC will liaise closely with HAD in monitoring community reaction, so that the Government Secretariat and departments concerned are advised accordingly and also to ensure that appropriate and effective response action is taken.

5.10 All practical means and effective channels (such as SB, ImmD and ISD websites) should be used to alert and disseminate information to the public during emergencies. During emergency situations, maximum use should be made of the SB and ImmD websites and appropriate social media platforms.

6. CHAPTER 6

THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BUREAUX, DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

Roles and responsibilities of bureaux, departments and agencies will vary depending on the nature, severity and impact of the emergency or disaster which has occurred, as well as the response levels under this Contingency Plan.

To ensure maximum efficiency in IET and ERT operations, the plan will designate roles and responsibilities among the participating bureaux, departments and agencies for :

- ***EROOHK TIER TWO***
- ***EROOHK TIER THREE (formation and operation of the IET and ERT)***
- ***EROOHK TIER THREE (in Hong Kong)***

EROOHK TIER TWO

Security Bureau (SB)

6.1 SB will:

- be responsible for activating the response mechanism; and
- take lead agency responsibility for setting up the ECT, if needed, to oversee the handling of the incident.

Transport and Housing Bureau (THB)

6.2 THB will be a standing member of ECT and has a role as general liaison with Hong Kong airlines for the emergency response operation. Emergency response operation includes also the possible activation of the “reserved seats” or “chartered flights” arrangements as the body in charge may decide.

Information Services Department (ISD)

6.3 ISD will be a standing member of the ECT.

Tourism Commission (TC)

6.4 TC will be a standing member of the ECT. TC will primarily assist to liaise with the TIC to obtain relevant information, especially on the number of tour groups and the residents involved.

Immigration Department (ImmD)

6.5 ImmD will be a standing member of the ECT. ImmD will continue to work with SB to provide assistance to the residents, such as liaising with CDCM, conducting record checks and issuing urgent travel documents. The department will also scale up their AHU to enhance the hotline (1868) service for the residents. In consultation with SB, AHU will evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of deploying officers to the place of incident (before any IET is deployed) so as to make direct liaison with CDCM (or HKETCO if it is in Taiwan), obtain on-scene information, provide support to the residents, and offer necessary advice to IET/ERT (if eventually deployed).

EROOHK TIER THREE (formation and operation of the IET and ERT)

All team members in the field should be prepared to share others' responsibilities under the direction of the team leader as circumstances require.

Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS)

6.6 AMS may be required to:

- provide a medical team for inclusion in any overall international relief and rescue operation;
- provide a small medical team to cater to the needs of the Hong

Kong ERT;

- provide a small medical team to assist with medical repatriation; and
- assist clinical psychologists deployed at the scene, or provide limited on-scene emotional support to the residents in distress where no clinical psychology service is available.

Civil Aid Service (CAS)

6.7 CAS will be required to:

- provide administrative support to the ERT team leader;
- provide logistical support, which may include the provision of tents, water and food supplies and communication equipment; and
- may be required to provide an Urban Search, Rescue and Recovery team for inclusion in any overall rescue response.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB)

6.8 CMAB will be responsible for contacting the Mainland authorities, the Macao SAR authorities or the relevant Taiwan organizations for permission to deploy ERTs to emergencies/disasters on the Mainland, or in Macao or Taiwan respectively.

Customs and Excise Department (C&ED)

6.9 C&ED may be required to provide assistance in the clearance of team equipment taken overseas, and in liaison with their overseas counterparts in the host country for clearance of inbound team equipment (where the overseas counterparts are World Customs Organization members or where C&ED has direct contact points in the host country).

Fire Services Department (FSD)

6.10 FSD may be required to provide an Urban Search, Rescue and

Recovery Team for inclusion in any overall rescue response.

Food and Health Bureau (FHB)

6.11 Where an emergency is mainly communicable-disease-related in nature, FHB will take over as lead bureau for the response management efforts.

6.12 The Secretary for Food and Health will be responsible for coordinating the response efforts required of SWD, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), DH, HA and other relevant department(s) as necessary.

Government Flying Service (GFS)

6.13 GFS may be required to provide fixed wing or helicopter support for search operations or victim transportation.

Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)

6.14 The HKPF may be required to provide victim identification or casualty/victim enquiry services. They may also be requested to provide security advice for the ERT.

Hospital Authority (HA)

6.15 The HA may be required to participate in the overall response operation in such ways as directed/coordinated by FHB. They may be required to provide:

- a medical team for inclusion into any overall international relief and rescue operation;
- a team to work with other departments deployed (including AMS and SWD) to assist with the on-scene psychological services;
- a small medical team to cater to the needs of the ERT; and
- a team to assist with medical repatriation.

Immigration Department (ImmD)

6.16 ImmD will be required to:

- provide information from the department's records in order to help with resident and victim identification;
- issue temporary immigration documentation to the residents in distress; and
- provide relief services in the field, with the assistance of other team members as necessary.

Information Services Department (ISD)

6.17 The ISD may be required to provide officer(s) as part of the external response team, to provide on-site media coordination and response.

Office of the Government of the HKSAR in Beijing (BJO), Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (HKETOs) in Guangdong, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan, and Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office (Taiwan) (HKETCO)

6.18 Where appropriate, BJO and HKETOs in Guangdong, Shanghai, Chengdu and Wuhan will liaise with the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office and the Foreign Affairs Office of the respective city/province and relevant Mainland authorities in order to collect information relating to the event (occurring on the Mainland) and the conditions of the victims involved. HKETCO would collect information relating to the event occurring in Taiwan and the conditions of the victims involved, and provide practical assistance to the victims concerned.

Security Bureau (SB)

6.19 SB will:

- be responsible for activating the response mechanism;
- take lead agency responsibility for EROOHK, unless the

emergency is communicable-disease-related in nature where this responsibility will fall on FHB; and

- depending on the size of the IET and ERT, provide an officer of DS or PAS rank, or a member of the ESU, to lead the team. Where an officer of DS or PAS rank is selected, a suitable ESU officer will be deployed as deputy team leader.

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

6.20 SWD may be required to provide professional staff such as clinical psychologist(s) and social worker(s) as part of the deployed external team, and, together with other departments such as HA and AMS, to provide consultation and psychological support.

EROOHK TIER THREE (in Hong Kong)

Administration Wing, Chief Secretary for Administration's Office (D of Adm)

6.21 The D of Adm will be responsible for co-ordinating the use of resources from the Disaster Relief Fund, where the response involves Hong Kong contributing to or participating in a larger international effort providing emergency aid to the affected country or region.

Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK)

6.22 The AAHK will be required to render assistance in the facilitation of the arrival and departure of any IET or ERT, and to provide logistical and other assistance to HAD in setting up reception desks at the airport to help the residents upon their return to Hong Kong.

Department of Health (DH)

6.23 DH will advise on public health measures which may need to be implemented, including quarantine and isolation arrangements for evacuees and returnees as appropriate.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)

6.24 FEHD will assist in the disposal of deceased victims upon arrival in Hong Kong, particularly cremation services.

Food and Health Bureau (FHB)

6.25 Where an external emergency is mainly communicable-disease-related in nature, FHB will take over as lead bureau for the response management efforts.

6.26 FHB will be responsible for coordinating the response efforts required from SWD, FEHD, DH and HA and other department(s) as necessary.

Home Affairs Department (HAD)

6.27 The HAD will act as the Relief Co-ordinator (Home), responsible for working out and providing financial relief to the victims and/or their family members from the General Chinese Charities Fund or any other source within its jurisdiction for implementation at the scene of disaster by members of the IET and ERT, and will provide a full range of support services to the residents upon their return to Hong Kong.

6.28 Where necessary, HAD will advise the IET and ERT on any relief measures which need to be implemented on site, and will be responsible for setting up reception desks at the airport or other points of entry where the residents will be returning.

Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF)

6.29 The HKPF will, where necessary, activate their casualty/victim identification procedures in Hong Kong.

Hospital Authority (HA)

6.30 The HA will where necessary, receive and provide treatment for injured residents returning to Hong Kong.

Immigration Department (ImmD)

6.31 The ImmD will provide support services for returning the residents issued with temporary travel documents overseas.

Information Services Department (ISD)

6.32 The ISD will, in consultation with the Director of the CE's Office, advise and coordinate the overall public relations strategy aimed at:

- re-assuring the public of effective political leadership in the response; and
- publicising any Government initiatives or actions to assist the residents in distress.

6.33 In fulfilling this role, they will liaise with the concerned bureaux and departments to ensure the issue of timely and accurate press releases on the external operation and related developments.

Security Bureau (SB)

6.34 The SB will take lead agency responsibility for external operations in accordance with this plan, unless the emergency is communicable-disease-related in nature where the responsibility will fall to FHB.

6.35 Upon the direction of the S for S or a designated senior SB official, the EMSC will be activated.

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

6.36 The SWD will where necessary:

- provide counselling services for the residents in distress;
- provide critical incident stress management services for all members of a deployed external team; and
- provide emergency financial and other welfare assistance for those in genuine need.

Tourism Commission (TC)

6.37 TC will coordinate assistance from members of the tourism industry with contacts in the country/area affected by the emergency.

Transport and Housing Bureau (THB)

6.38 THB will be a standing member of ECT and has a role as general liaison with Hong Kong airlines for the emergency response operation. Emergency response operation includes also the possible activation of the “reserved seats” or “chartered flights” arrangements as the body in charge may decide.

7. CHAPTER 7

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Departmental Standing Orders

7.1 To ensure that appropriate and effective response action is taken, appropriate bureaux and departments are required to establish contingency plans within their own areas of responsibility to deal with their response to emergency situations.

7.2 Departmental plans should be in line with the provisions contained in this circular. Copies should be circulated to relevant departments for their information and to ESU.

7.3 Bureaux and departments should examine critical computer-based business systems that are vital to any emergency response operations and incorporate into their plans, disaster recovery procedures and rehearsals which ensure that these systems are operational during external deployments.

7.4 With regard to the ECT mechanism for EROOHK Tier TWO incident response, relevant parties will assign dedicated contact points under the emergency plan and arrange regular briefings or training to them so as to strengthen emergency response and coordination, both within and outside the Government.

7.5 For EROOHK Tier THREE incident response, departments should ensure that they adopt appropriate training programs to ensure that officers likely to be required to participate in any IET, or to form part of any ERT, are fully prepared. This should include an element of training in basic emotional/psychological first aid.

7.6 Bureaux and departments should provide their dedicated contact points to SB to facilitate emergency coordination.

END OF PLAN