# Disclaimer

This report was compiled as a complete and finalized statement of professional findings and opinions based on the information and evidence known to the Inter-Departmental Fire Investigation Task Force ("IFITF") during the active phase of the investigation of the No.5 Alarm Fire at Wang Fuk Court.

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# Interim Investigation Report
# No.5 Alarm Fire at Wang Fuk Court on 26 November 2025

## Inter-Departmental Fire Investigation Task Force

February 2026

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# Foreword

This interim report was compiled based on the information available as of the date of completion. Accordingly, if further information comes to light, the report may require modification to reflect a reassessment of the existing material or to incorporate new information, either before or during the Independent Committee's inquiry or the Coroner's inquest.

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADO | Assistant Divisional Officer |
| Amb | Ambulance |
| BA | Breathing Apparatus |
| BD | Buildings Department |
| BO | Buildings Ordinance |
| BS | British Standards |
| CCTV | Closed-circuit Television |
| CFD | Computational Fluid Dynamics |
| CFO | Chief Fire Officer |
| China Status Development | China Status Development and Engineering Company Limited |
| CL | Circular Letter |
| CoP on MOE 1976 | The Code of Practice on Provision of Means of Escape in Case of Fire and Allied Requirements 1976 |
| DCFO | Deputy Chief Fire Officer |
| DCP | Director's Command Post |
| DD | Deputy Director |
| DDC | Deputy Divisional Commander |
| DO | Divisional Officer |
| D of FS | Director of Fire Services |
| EMSC | Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre |
| EMSD | Electrical and Mechanical Services Department |
| EN | European Standard |
| ELD | Electricity Legislation Division |
| ERT | Emergency Response Team |
| FA | Fire Alarm |
| FAS | Fire Alarm System |
| FE | Fire Extinguisher |
| FH/HR System | Fire Hydrant / Hose Reel System |
| FL | Fanling |
| FLFStn | Fanling Fire Station |
| Fn | Fireman |
| FR | Fire-retardant |
| FS | Fire Services |
| FSCC | Fire Services Communications Centre |
| FSD | Fire Services Department |
| FSI | Fire Service Installations or Equipment |
| FStn | Fire Station |
| GB | GuoBiao |
| GL | Government Laboratory |
| GSO | Gas Standards Office |
| HA | Housing Authority |
| HB | Housing Bureau |
| HKO | Hong Kong Observatory |
| HKPF | Hong Kong Police Force |
| HO | Housing Ordinance |

| | |
|---|---|
| HOS | Home Ownership Scheme |
| HP | Hydraulic Platform |
| ICU | Independent Checking Unit under the Housing Bureau |
| IFITF | Inter-departmental Fire Investigation Task Force |
| LD | Labour Department |
| LRU | Light Rescue Unit |
| MBIS | Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme |
| MP | Major Pump |
| MRU | Major Rescue Unit |
| MSA | Mine Safety Appliances, or MSA Safety Incorporated |
| MW | Megawatts |
| MWCS | Minor Works Control System |
| M&M | Management and Maintenance |
| NFPA | National Fire Protection Association |
| NTE | New Territories East |
| NTN | New Territories North |
| NTS | New Territories South |
| OC | Owners' Corporation |
| Oic | Officer-in-charge |
| Ops | Operations |
| PDA | Pre-determined Attendance |
| PFn | Principal Fireman |
| PMC | Property Management Company |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| PRH | Public Rental Housing |
| PStnO | Probationary Station Officer |
| P&C | Public Safety and Corporate Strategy |
| RFSIC | Registered Fire Service Installation Contractor |
| RHP | Reserve Heavy Pump |
| RI | Registered Inspector |
| R/F | Roof Floor |
| R/T | Radio Telephone |
| SAR | Search and Rescue |
| SB | Security Bureau |
| SDO | Senior Divisional Officer |
| SFn | Senior Fireman |
| SST | Safety Support Team |
| SStnO | Senior Station Officer |
| ST | Sha Tin |
| StnC | Station Commander |
| StnO | Station Officer |
| TP | Tai Po |
| TL | Turntable Ladder |

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# Chapter 1 – Preamble

## 1.1 Preamble

1.1.1 On 26.11.2025 at about 1451 hours, the Fire Services Communications Centre (FSCC) received a building fire call[1] at Wang Cheong House of Wang Fuk Court. A full No.1 Alarm Fire Pre-determined Attendance (PDA), along with additional fire appliances[2], was immediately dispatched.

1.1.2 The initial attendance was led by Senior Station Officer (SStnO) HUI Kin-on. In view of the rapid fire development and more resources required for firefighting and rescue, the fire was raised to No.3 Alarm at 1502 hours (about six minutes after his arrival at 1456 hours). At 1519 hours, Assistant Divisional Officer (ADO) CHEUNG Lok-hang took on the role of Incident Commander upon his arrival at scene. Ten minutes later, Divisional Officer (DO) LAM Ho-chun arrived and took over as Incident Commander of the No.3 Alarm Fire.

1.1.3 Shortly thereafter, DO LAM Ho-chun raised the fire to No.4 Alarm at 1534 hours. A total of 48 fire appliances and 13 ambulances, with 269 Fire Services (FS) members, were dispatched to the scene. Deputy Chief Fire Officer (New Territories North) (DCFO(NTN)) WONG King-man and Chief Fire Officer (New Territories North ) (CFO(NTN)) TANG Wing-wah took on the role of Incident Commander of the No. 4 Alarm Fire at 1550 hours and 1618 hours respectively.

1.1.4 In face of the development and the continued increase of assistance calls, Deputy Director (Operations) (DD(Ops)) CHAN Derek Armstrong upgraded the fire to No. 5 Alarm at 1822 hours and assumed overall command. By that moment, a total of 116 fire appliances and 55 ambulances with 718 FS members were dispatched.

1.1.5 The fire was eventually surrounded at 2131 hours on 27.11.2025 and under control at 0315 hours on 28.11.2025. The fire was largely put out at 1018 hours on 28.11.2025. During the whole firefighting and rescue operation, over 100 persons were rescued by the Fire Services Department (FSD). Tragically, 79 individuals sustained injuries and 168 lives were lost, including one FS member.

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1 The informant reported a fire with explosion occurred at scaffolding installed along the external wall of Wang Cheong House of Wang Fuk Court.

2 Additional fire appliances were turned out in response to the renovation works being carried out thereon and the defective Fire Service Installations (FSI) of the building.

# Chapter 2 – Inter-departmental Fire Investigation Task Force

## 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Due to the severity of the fire damage and the large number of casualties and fatalities resulting from the incident, an Inter-departmental Fire Investigation Task Force (IFITF) was established on 28.11.2025 to investigate the incident.

2.1.2 The IFITF comprises representatives from FSD, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), the Buildings Department (BD), the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) under the Housing Bureau (HB), the Labour Department (LD) and the Government Laboratory (GL) as well as fire engineering professionals.

## 2.2 Composition of the IFITF

| *Role* | *Member* | *Department / Unit* |
|---|---|---|
| *Leader* | Mr. YIU Men-yeung<br>Assistant Director<br>(New Territories South) | FSD |
| *Member* | Mr. CHIK Kin-hang, Alex<br>Chief Building Surveyor<br>(New Territories East (2) and Rail) | BD |
| | Mr. LEUNG Yiu-hong<br>Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer<br>(Electricity Legislation); and<br><br>Mr. HUI Wing-koon, Joe<br>Chief Engineer<br>(Gas Standards A) | EMSD |
| | Dr. LEE Wing-man<br>Senior Chemist<br>(Chemical Sciences Section) | GL |
| | Ms. LEE King-hei, Frances<br>Senior Superintendent of Police<br>(Crime New Territories North Headquarters) | HKPF |
| | Mr. HUI Choi-wah, Anthony<br>Chief Maintenance Surveyor<br>(Independent Checking Unit) | ICU |

| *Role* | *Member* | *Department / Unit* |
|---|---|---|
| *Member* | Mr. YUEN Tsz-lok, Murphy<br>Chief Occupational Safety Officer<br>(Operations) | LD |
| | Professor<br>YUEN Kwok-kit, Richard | Fire Engineering Professional |

## 2.3 Terms of Reference

2.3.1 The IFITF focuses on two primary objectives:

(i) Investigating the cause of the fire and how it spread; and

(ii) Determining the factors that led to heavy casualties.

2.3.2 The Terms of Reference are outlined in ***Appendix A-1***.

# Chapter 3 – Methodologies

## 3.1 Investigation Methodologies

3.1.1 The investigation was conducted with reference to international standards, including 中國消防救援領域行業標準 XF/T 812-2008《火災原因調查指南》and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 921 "Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigations", which include the following elements:

- Scene Examination
- Evidence Collection
- Witness Interviews
- Laboratory and Expert Analysis

## 3.2 Scene Examination

3.2.1 The examination included a systematic inspection of the fire scene, focusing on fire patterns, smoke movement, structural damage, and photographic/video documentation.

## 3.3 Evidence Collection

3.3.1 The task involved securing and preserving physical evidence, including burnt materials, scaffolding bamboo, safety nets[3] and polystyrene window covers, as well as ensuring that the chain of evidence was maintained to meet court standards. Voice recordings of radio communications, closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage, photos and video captured during the incident were also examined.

## 3.4 Witness Interviews

3.4.1 Statements were obtained from witnesses, including workers, evacuees and frontline firefighters to gather first-hand accounts of the incident.

## 3.5 Laboratory and Expert Analysis

3.5.1 Collected samples were submitted to accredited laboratories for chemical analysis, material testing and combustion property testing. Bench-scale experiments, computer simulations, and full-scale fire tests were also conducted. Furthermore, the autopsy reports were reviewed.

[3] In the context of this report, the term "safety nets" refers to those provided to envelop bamboo scaffolds for protection against falling objects.

# Chapter 4 – Background Information of Wang Fuk Court

## 4.1 General Description of Wang Fuk Court

4.1.1 Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po is a residential development under the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS). Under the Scheme, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) builds homes for sale to eligible households at discounted prices. Completed in 1983, Wang Fuk Court comprises 8 domestic blocks, each with 32-storey tall, (i.e. G/F, 1/F to 31/F), namely:

- Wang Yan House (Block A);
- Wang Tao House (Block B);
- Wang Sun House (Block C);
- Wang Kin House (Block D);
- Wang Tai House (Block E);
- Wang Cheong House (Block F);
- Wang Shing House (Block G); and
- Wang Chi House (Block H).

In total, 1,984 domestic flats are provided in Wang Fuk Court, all of which were sold to eligible buyers in the 1980s.

4.1.2 Pursuant to the Buildings Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 123) and the Housing Ordinance (HO) (Cap. 283), HA buildings, including new construction sites of HA and existing public rental housing (PRH) estates without any part sold or otherwise disposed of by HA, are exempt from the provisions of the BO. As such, the design of Wang Fuk Court (being a new construction site at the time of development) was exempt from the BO, but HA had developed it with reference to the prevailing statutory provisions as well as relevant codes of practice or guidelines issued by the then Building Authority.

4.1.3 The typical floor plan of Wang Cheong House, which closely resembles the floor plans of other buildings in Wang Fuk Court, is shown in **Figure 4-1**. There are four wings in each block, with each wing comprising two domestic flats and connecting to the lift lobby. There is a re-entrant between two wings, and there are in total four re-entrants at the outside of each block extending from the 1/F to the roof (as shown in **Photo 4-1 & Figure 4-2**).

4.1.4 Each block of Wang Fuk Court has two staircases arranged in a scissor configuration[4]. Of the two staircases, only one provides access to the roof, while the other terminates at the 31/F. According to the as-built drawings, there are three firemen's lifts in each block to serve all floors, with each lift stops at every three floors.

4.1.5 On every floor, one window is provided to the staircase and another window is provided to the lift lobby. One of the re-entrants is located immediately outside the lift lobby window (as shown in **Photos 4-2 (a) & (b) & Figure 4-3**) whereas another re-entrant is located immediately outside the staircase window (as shown in **Photos 4-3 (a) & (b) & Figure 4-4**).

4.1.6 Post-fire inspections revealed that there were minor alterations in some of the domestic flats. Although such alterations did not contribute to the fire development, the layout plans are attached in ***Appendix A-2*** for reference.

4.1.7 From a technical perspective, fire safety in buildings can be divided into two main categories: "active fire safety provisions" and "passive fire safety provisions", both of which work together to ensure the overall building fire safety.

4.1.8 **Active fire safety provisions** refer to FSI that operate during a fire. For instance, fire detection system and fire alarm system (FAS) can identify a fire at an early stage and alert occupants to evacuate promptly, sprinkler system activates automatically to suppress flames and limit their spread and fire hydrant and hose reel system (FH/HR System) provides essential means for extinguishing fires.

4.1.9 **Passive fire safety provisions** are embedded in the design and construction of the building itself. They prevent the spread of fire and smoke, maintain structural stability, and ensure sufficient means for occupants to evacuate while enabling fire personnel to carry out rescue and firefighting operations. Examples include fire-rated partitions and fire doors, which must provide adequate resistance to minimise the spread of fire and smoke; structural components that require certified fire resistance ratings to preserve integrity during a fire incident; and escape routes must also be designed with sufficient width and protective measures to allow safe evacuation.

[4] Two independent, interlocking flights of stairs stacked vertically.

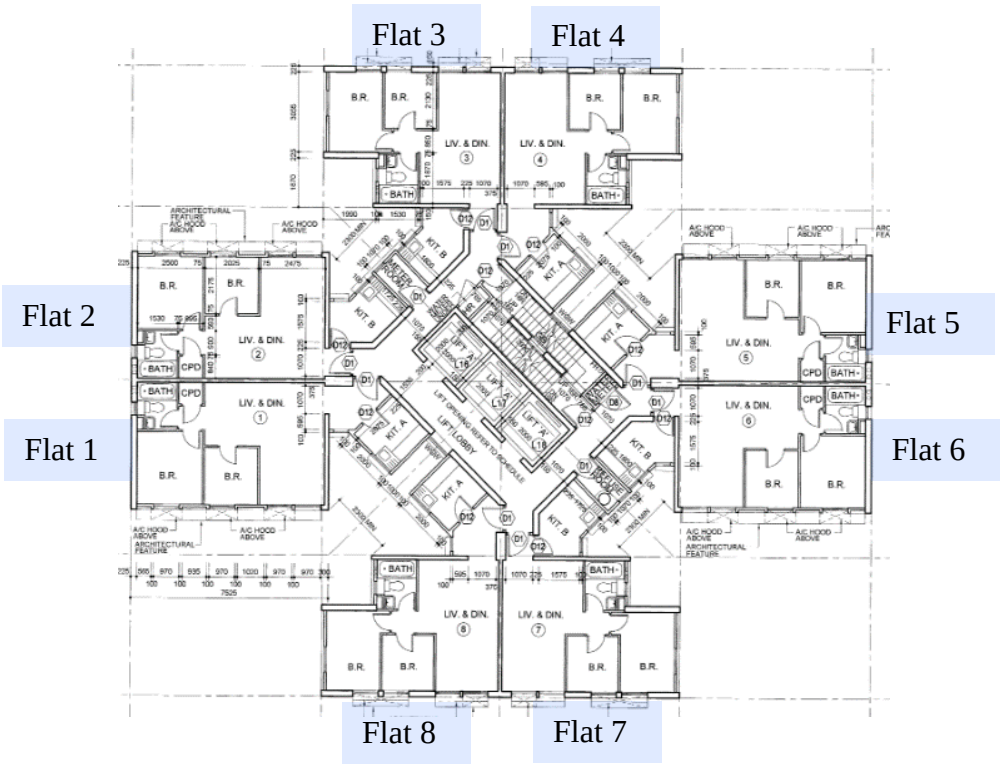


*Figure 4-1: Typical Floor Plan of Wang Cheong House*

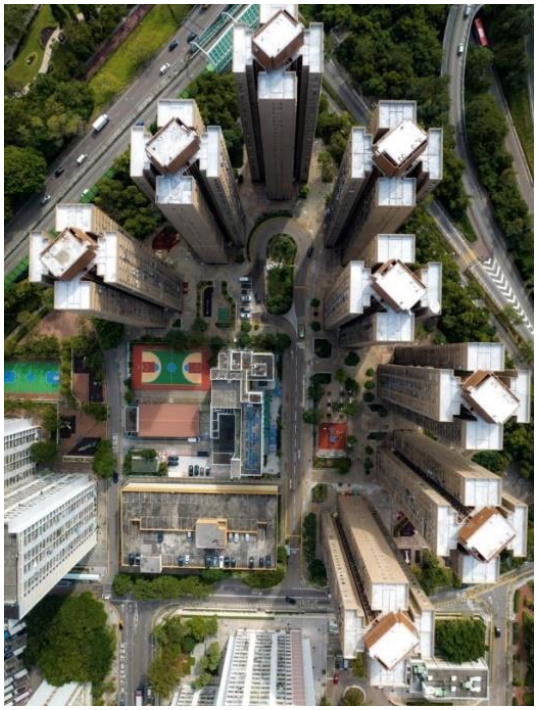

*Photo 4-1:*
*Wang Fuk Court*
*(Photo taken in 2023)*[5]

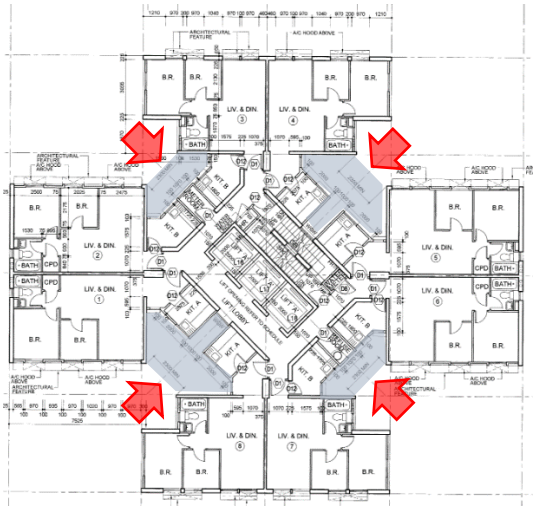

*Figure 4-2:*
*Locations of Re-entrants*
*in Wang Cheong House*

5 Consent from Mr. Austin Bell had been obtained for incorporating his photo into the report.

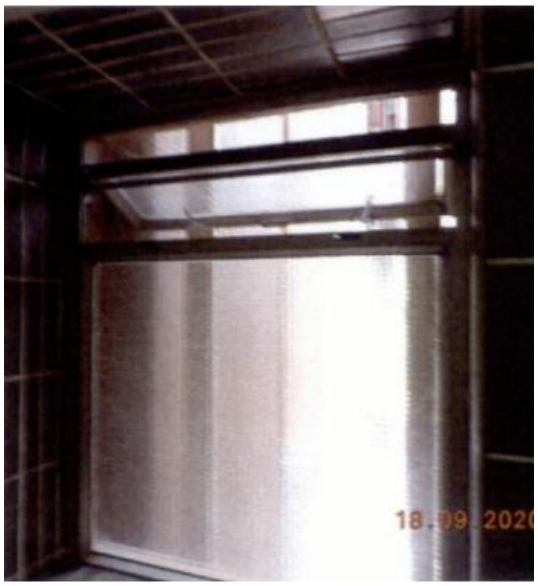


*Photo 4-2 (a):*
*Lift Lobby Window*
*(Before renovation works)*

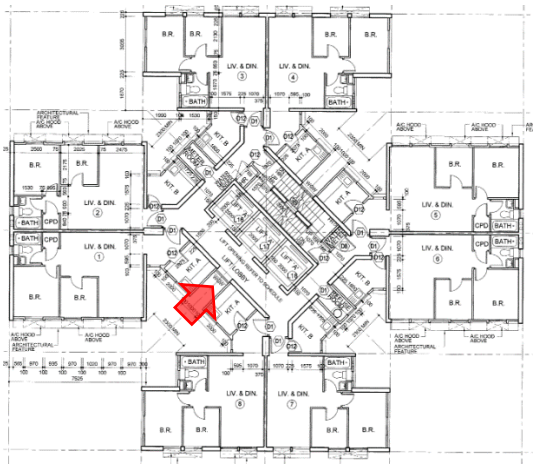

*Figure 4-3:*
*Location of Lift Lobby Window*

*Photo 4-2(b): Lift Lobby Window*
*(Photo taken after the fire)*

*Photo 4-3 (a):*
*Staircase Window*
*(Before renovation works)*

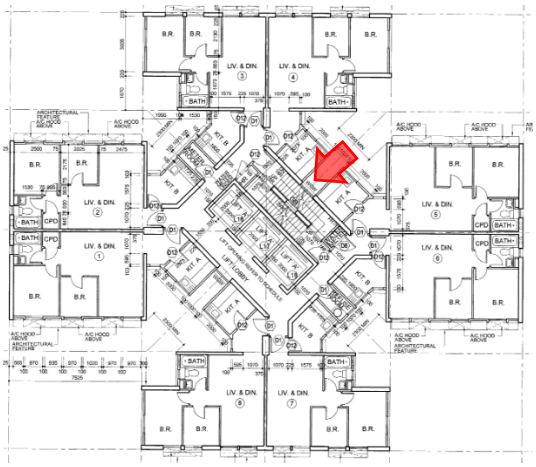

*Figure 4-4:*
*Location of Staircase Window*

*Photo 4-3(b): Staircase Window*
*(Photo taken after the fire)*

## 4.2 FSIs Provisions [Active Fire Safety Provision]

4.2.1 All blocks of Wang Fuk Court are provided with the following FSIs:

- Manual FAS
- FH/HR System
- Fire Extinguisher (FE)
- Emergency Lighting System[6] (EL System)

Such provisions comply with the "Codes of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment and Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Installations and Equipment (1979)", which was applicable at the time of Wang Fuk Court's development.

4.2.2 According to the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B), the owner of any FSI shall have such installation or equipment inspected by a Registered Fire Service Installation Contractor (RFSIC) at least once every 12 months.

4.2.3 The annual inspection for all blocks of Wang Fuk Court was carried out by the RFSIC, Victory Fire Engineering Limited, in March 2025. According to the certificates submitted to FSD, all the FSIs provided were in compliance with FSD requirements and should be operable. Although the systems were generally satisfactory in condition, several minor defects were identified and required follow-up or repair action[7].

4.2.4 Between April and September 2025, shutdown notifications[8] of FSI were submitted to FSD by another RFSIC China Status Development and Engineering Company Limited (China Status Development), reporting that the shutdown of the sole FH/HR system to each block was required.

4.2.5 After receiving the said shutdown notifications, personnel from Tai Po Fire Station conducted onsite risk assessment and issued advisory letters to remind the owner to maintain fire safety within the buildings while the systems were non-operable, emphasizing the importance of expediting the completion of repair works.

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6 The provision of EL system is not a mandatory requirement (i.e. over-provision).

7 Advisory letters were issued to Wang Tao House, Wang Kin House, and Wang Chi House for defects that did not impair the system's designed function; while warning letters were issued to Wang Sun House and Wang Tai House.

8 Shutdown notifications were submitted by China Status Development in respect of Wang Tai House & Wang Chi House on 7.4.2025, Wang Kin House on 16.5.2025, Wang Shing House on 16.6.2025, Wang Sun House on 4.7.2025, Wang Tao House on 11.7.2025 and Wang Yan House & Wang Cheong House on 5.9.2025.

## 4.3 Fire Resisting Construction [Passive Fire Safety Provision]

4.3.1 At the time of construction of Wang Fuk Court, the prevailing standard on fire resisting construction was stipulated in the Building (Construction) Regulations as well as the Code of Practice on Provision of Means of Escape in Case of Fire and Allied Requirements 1976 (CoP on MOE 1976).

4.3.2 According to the CoP on MOE 1976, windows in the external walls of the staircases were not required to be fire-rated unless they oppose and are within 6m of (i) the opposite side of a street; (ii) the lot boundary, not being a common boundary with the street; or (iii) any other building on the same lot. As such, the upper part of the windows at the lift lobbies as well as in the staircases of the eight blocks of Wang Fuk Court was openable, while the lower part of the windows were fixed lights (see **Photos 4-2 (a) & 4-3 (a)**).

## 4.4 Management of Wang Fuk Court

4.4.1 As mentioned in paragraph 4.1.1 above, HOS courts are developed by HA for sale to eligible households at discounted prices. When an HOS court is completed and sold or divested, the management and maintenance (M&M) responsibilities initially rest with HA until the establishment of an Owners' Corporation (OC). Once an OC is established, HA would transfer the M&M responsibilities to the OC. The OC may appoint its own Property Management Company (PMC) to carry out such duties, and both the OC and its appointed PMC must comply with the provisions under the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344) and the Deed of Mutual Covenant of the development.

4.4.2 In the case of Wang Fuk Court, all 1,984 flats were sold to eligible buyers in the 1980s. Following the establishment of the OC of Wang Fuk Court in January 1997, HA transferred the M&M responsibilities to the OC in November 1997.

4.4.3 The current PMC appointed by the OC of Wang Fuk Court is ISS EastPoint Property Properties Limited (置邦興業管理有限公司)[9]. Furthermore, security guards stationed on the ground floor with patrol services provided for all blocks. Additionally, a CCTV system[10] with round-the-clock surveillance was installed, covering all three lifts, front building entrances and the bicycle parking areas.

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9 According to the minutes of OC's meeting held on 7 December .12.2025, published on the OC's website 置邦興業有限公司(i.e. ISS EastPoint Properties Limited) was the PMC of Wang Fuk Court.

10 The CCTV system covering the lifts and main entrance of Wang Cheong House was found to be malfunctioning; therefore, relevant footage was unavailable.

## 4.5 Major Renovation Works at Wang Fuk Court

4.5.1 Under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS)[11], owners of buildings aged 30 years or above (except domestic buildings not exceeding 3 storeys) who are served with statutory notices are required to appoint a Registered Inspector (RI) to carry out the prescribed inspection and supervise the prescribed repair works found necessary for the common parts, external walls and projections or signboards of the buildings. [12]

4.5.2 The prescribed inspection and repairs under MBIS [13] cover external elements and other physical elements, structural elements, fire safety elements, drainage system and unauthorized building works[14].

4.5.3 As mentioned in paragraph 4.1.2 above, HA buildings, including new construction sites of HA and existing PRH estates without any part sold or otherwise disposed of by HA, are exempt from the provisions of the BO. Yet, estates/courts developed by HA with any part thereof sold or otherwise disposed of are subject to the BO. For these estates/courts, pursuant to the Delegation Instruments made by the Director of Buildings, ICU is delegated with authority from BD to act as Building Authority to exercise the relevant statutory control, in accordance with the BO and the policies and guidelines issued by BD.

*4.5.4* *The Case of Wang Fuk Court*

4.5.4.1 For Wang Fuk Court, which was developed by HA but divested to individual owners, ICU assumes the role of BD for implementation of the MBIS and Minor Works Control System (MWCS), including issuing statutory notices, handling related complaints and enquiries and processing minor works submissions, etc.

4.5.4.2 The eight blocks of Wang Fuk Court were selected as target buildings for implementation of MBIS in 2014. ICU served the statutory notices under

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11 Full implementation of MBIS commenced in June 2012 to address the long-standing problem of building neglect and to ensure building safety in the long run.
Source of Reference: https://www.bd.gov.hk/en/safety-inspection/mbis/index.html

12 Since 1992, the then Director of Buildings and Lands authorised officers of the Housing Department to take up the duties and responsibilities under the BO on behalf of the BA to exercise building control over sold buildings under the HOS. This authorisation has been redirected to officers of ICU since 2004 and continues till now. The latest authorisation by the Director of Buildings to ICU covers matters regarding control of sold HOS buildings under the BO, including implementation of the MBIS and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme, the Minor Works Control System, processing alterations and additions submissions, and handling of related reports, complaints and enquiries. Wang Fuk Court is a sold HOS development and is thus regulated by ICU under this authorisation.

13 Source of reference: Code of Practice for The Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and The Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme 2012 (2023 Edition).

14 The unauthorized building works to be identified shall cover those in the common parts of the building; on the exterior other than the common parts of the building (such as external wall, roof or podium, yard or slope adjoining the building); and on the street on which the building fronts or abuts.
Source of Reference: https://www.bd.gov.hk/en/safety-inspection/mbis/scope-and-standards/index.html

MBIS to the OC of Wang Fuk Court on 10.6.2016. The OC of Wang Fuk Court subsequently appointed an RI on 5.11.2019 to carry out the prescribed inspection and supervise the prescribed repair works according to the requirements under MBIS.

4.5.4.3 The overall scope of the repair and renovation works was decided by the OC, which was more than those prescribed repair works under MBIS. It is noteworthy that the proposed works in respect of replacement of the existing windows with fire-rated windows[15] at the staircases are not one of the prescribed repair works under the MBIS, but an optional works item as shown in the inspection report submitted by RI.

4.5.4.4 It is noted that the renovation work of Wang Fuk Court commenced in 2024. The OC engaged the Prestige Construction & Engineering Co. Limited (宏業建築工程有限公司) as the contractor for this renovation project.

4.5.4.5 The external wall repair work was included as part of the renovation work. For this purpose, scaffolding works commenced outside the external walls of all blocks of Wang Fuk Court since July 2024, according to the record provided by the PMC. These scaffoldings[16] (comprising bamboos, wooden planks, toe-boards, safety nets, canvas[17] and nylon strips[18]) enveloped all blocks entirely from G/F to R/F (as shown in **Photo 4-4** and **Photo 4-5**).

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15 In accordance with the eight submissions under MWCS by the Authorized Person to ICU, all existing windows at staircases would be replaced with fire-rated windows with fire resistance rating of -/60/60 (i.e. ensuring 60 minutes of both integrity and insulation).

16 Relevant required standard could be found in the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety issued by LD, as well as the Guidelines on the Design and Construction of Bamboo Scaffold and relevant Practice Notes and Circular Letters (CLs) issued by BD.
Source of Reference:

- https://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/os/B/Bamboo.pdf
- https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/code-and-design-manuals/GDCBS.pdf
- https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/practice-notes-and-circular-letters/circular/CL_UFRPNSTPSFBCDRMW2023e.pdf
- https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/tc/resources/codes-and-references/code-and-design-manuals/MW/MWTGc_amendment_oct2025.pdf

17 Safety net, screen, tarpaulin or plastic sheeting used to cover the façade of buildings under construction, demolition, repair or minor works should have appropriate fire retardant (FR) properties in compliance with a recognised standard, such as GuoBiao Standard (GB) 5725-2009, British Standards (BS) 5867-2:2008 or NFPA 701:2019, as specified in the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety issued by LD and the CL issued by BD.

18 Nylon strips are used for knotting in bamboo scaffoldings.

*4.5.5* *Observations after the Fire*

4.5.5.1 Catch-fans [19] with protective screen atop were positioned outside the scaffoldings to intercept and contain the paths of falling objects at the building exterior. These catch-fans, along with safety nets, played an integral role in preventing falling debris and ensuring the safety of passers-by underneath (as shown in **Photo 4-6**).

4.5.5.2 Wooden planks [20] were laid as working platforms to facilitate workers carrying out work at the building exterior and to prevent them from falling from height (as shown in **Photo 4-7**).

4.5.5.3 Toe-boards[21], with a minimum height of 200mm, were also provided to prevent workers or objects from falling from height (as shown in **Photo 4-8**).

4.5.5.4 For all blocks of Wang Fuk Court, all the existing staircase windows, of which the upper part was openable, were proposed to be replaced with fire-rated windows[22] as part of the renovation works of Wang Fuk Court. As explained in paragraph 4.5.4.3 above, such proposed works were not a prescribed repair item under the MBIS regime; but given that it was categorised as a type of minor works under the MWCS[23] (as shown in **Photo 4-3(b))**, relevant minor works submissions were submitted to ICU under MWCS. While it was indicated in the relevant minor works submissions that all windows at staircases would be replaced with fire-rated windows, it was only revealed after the fire that some windows at the staircases were replaced with movable boards, most of them believed to be wooden, to provide convenient access for workers to the scaffoldings (as shown in **Photos 4-9 (a) & (b)**) at the following locations:

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19 A sloping catch-fan at not more than 15m vertical intervals to give minimum horizontal projection coverage of 1,500mm should be provided according to the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety issued by LD and the Guidelines on the Design and Construction of Bamboo Scaffold issued by BD.

20 For the purpose of occupational safety, proper working platforms, made of wooden planks / boards, shall be provided for construction works involving working at height so as to ensure that the works can be carried out safely according to the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety issued by LD.

21 The relevant requirement for toe-boards can be found in the Code of Practice for Bamboo Scaffolding Safety issued by LD for the purpose of occupational safety.

22 According to Clause 23 of the CoP on MOE 1976, which was the prevailing standard at the time of construction of Wang Fuk Court, the provision of fire-rated fixed windows at staircases was not required.

23 MWCS aims to facilitate building owners and occupants in carrying out small-scale building works safely and lawfully through simplified requirements.
Source of Reference: https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/practice-notes-and-circular-letters/pnap/APP/APP147.pdf

| ***Building*** | ***Staircase*** | ***Floor*** |
|---|---|---|
| ***Wang Yan House*** | Rear staircase | between 3/F & 4/F |
| | Front staircase | between 8/F & 9/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 15/F & 16/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 19/F & 20/F |
| | Front staircase | between 24/F & 25/F |
| | Front staircase | between 28/F & 29/F |
| ***Wang Tao House*** | Front staircase | between 4/F & 5/F |
| | Front staircase | between 10/F & 11/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 15/F & 16/F |
| | Front staircase | between 20/F & 21/F |
| | Front staircase | between 26/F & 27/F |
| ***Wang Sun House*** | Rear staircase | between 5/F & 6/F |
| | Front staircase | between 10/F & 11/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 15/F & 16/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 19/F & 20/F |
| | Front staircase | between 24/F & 25/F |
| ***Wang Kin House*** | Front staircase | between 4/F & 5/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 9/F & 10/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 15/F & 16/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 19/F & 20/F |
| | Front staircase | between 24/F & 25/F |
| ***Wang Tai House and Wang Cheong House*** | Rear staircase | between 5/F & 6/F |
| | Front staircase | between 10/F & 11/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 15/F & 16/F |
| | Front staircase | between 20/F & 21/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 25/F & 26/F |
| ***Wang Shing House*** | Rear staircase | between 3/F & 4/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 9/F & 10/F |
| | Front staircase | between 14/F & 15/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 19/F & 20/F |
| | Front staircase | between 24/F & 25/F |
| ***Wang Chi House*** | Front staircase | between 4/F & 5/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 9/F & 10/F |
| | Front staircase | between 14/F & 15/F |
| | Rear staircase | between 19/F & 20/F |
| | Front staircase | between 24/F & 25/F |

Photos of all movable boards are attached in ***Appendix A-30***.

4.5.6 To probe into the configuration of renovation work in each block of Wang Fuk Court, the only undamaged building, Wang Chi House, which was observed to be very similar to the undamaged parts of other blocks, was studied in detail subsequent to the fire:

4.5.6.1 At the open ground surrounding Wang Chi House, a significant quantity of construction materials was found including safety nets, wooden planks, bamboos and other covered construction materials (as shown in **Photo 4-10**).

4.5.6.2 A covered walkway was provided at the building entrance, shielding personnel underneath from falling debris (as shown in **Photos 4-11 (a) & (b)**).

4.5.6.3 A considerable amount of combustibles, including bamboos, wooden planks, safety nets, nylon strips and canvas, was located at the re-entrants (as shown in **Photos 4-12 (a) to (d)**). Especially at the re-entrants with windows immediately outside the lift lobby and staircases, where a triangular channel extending from the flat roof to the roof level was observed (as shown in **Photo 4-13**).

4.5.6.4 Polystyrene window covers[24] were found covering the windows of most flats, lift lobbies and staircases to protect window glass from accidental impacts (as shown in **Photos 4-14 (a) to (c)**).

*Photo 4-4: Renovation of Wang Fuk Court in 2024*

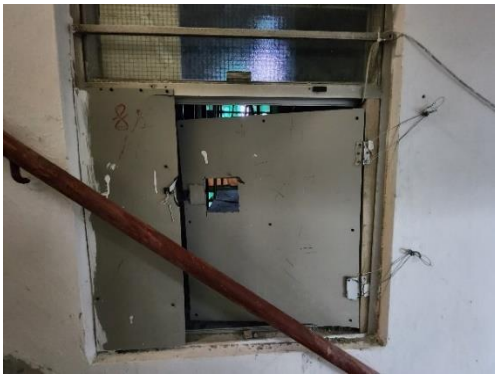
[24] Polystyrene window covers have been commonly referred to as "foam boards" in news reports and on social media.


*Photo 4-5: Photo Showing Different Combustibles in the Scaffolding (Bamboos, Safety nets, Canvas and Nylon strips)*


*Photo 4-6: Catch-fans outside the Scaffoldings*


*Photo 4-7: Close-up View of the Working Platforms*

*Photo 4-8: Toe-boards on the Working Platforms inside Scaffolding*

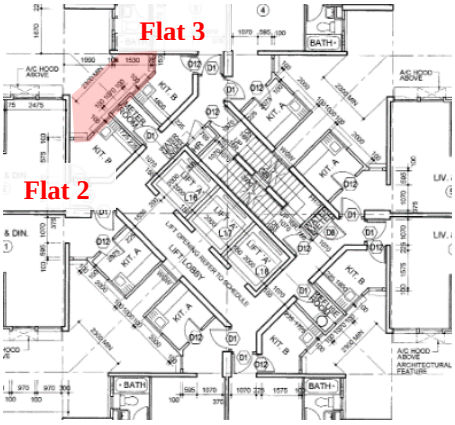


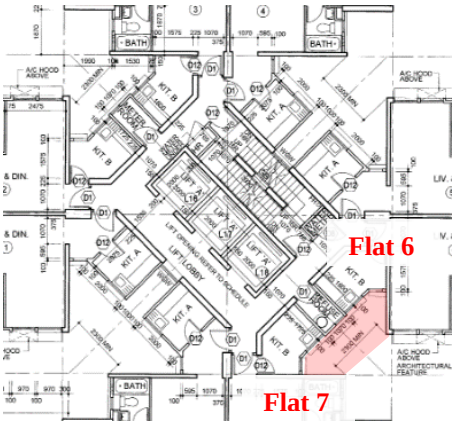
*Photos 4-9 (a) & (b): Replacement of Windows with Movable Boards*

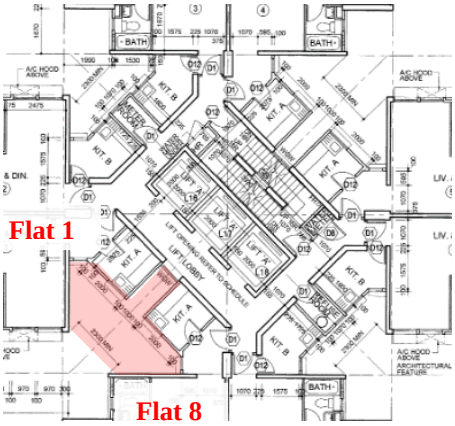
*Photo 4-10: Combustible Materials Scattered at Ground Level around Wang Chi House*

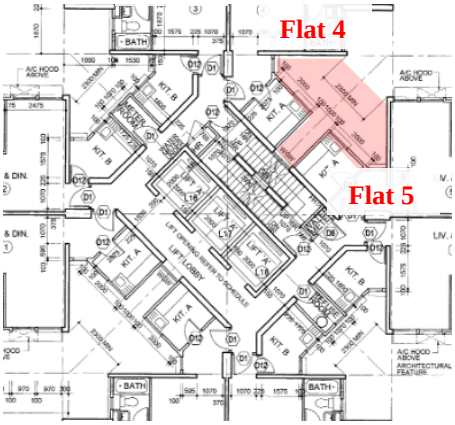

*Photo 4-11 (a): Covered Walkway at the Main Entrance of Wang Chi House*


*Photo 4-11 (b): Rear Entrance of Wang Chi House*




*Photos 4-12 (a) to (d): Re-entrants at Wang Chi House*

*Photo 4-13: Triangular Channel Leading from Flat Roof to R/F at the Re-entrant*

*Photos 4-14 (a) to (c): Polystyrene Window Covers*

# Chapter 5 – The Fire Development

## 5.1 Discovery of Fire

5.1.1 At 1451 hours, the informant, Mr. YIP [redacted][25], who was at the cycling path near Wang Cheong House, discovered a fire at Wang Fuk Court and immediately called 999 to report the fire (Location Map at **Figure 5-1**). According to the video provided by Mr. YIP, the fire was observed to have started on the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House (Screenshot shown in **Photo 5-1** and layout plan at **Figure 5-2**).

5.1.2 However, the investigation revealed that the fire might have started prior to Mr. YIP's report. According to CCTV footage, embers were observed falling onto the bicycle parking area of Wang Cheong House at approximately 1443 hours[26] (Screenshot shown in **Photo 5-2**).

5.1.3 Moreover, the following witnesses[27] who were present at Wang Cheong House at the material time reported discovering the fire prior to Mr. YIP's observation:

| | Name | Identity | Location | Time of Fire Discovery |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | HE [redacted] | Construction Worker | 3/F Scaffolding | Between 1415 hours and 1500 hours (The exact discovery time remained uncertain) |
| **2** | CHUNG [redacted] | Construction Worker | 4/F Scaffolding | |
| **3** | FANG [redacted] | Construction Worker | Scaffolding between 3/F – 4/F | |
| **4** | TAM [redacted] | Construction Worker | Scaffolding between 5/F – 6/F | |
| **5** | CHAN [redacted] | Construction Worker | Scaffolding between 5/F – 6/F | At about 1440 hours |
| **6** | ZHENG [redacted] | Construction Worker | Scaffolding near Flat 5[redacted] | At about 1440 hours |
| **7** | SUEN [redacted] | Occupant | Flat 21[redacted] | At about 1430 hours |
| **8** | CHUNG [redacted] | Security Guard | G/F Security Counter | At about 1448 hours |

[25] Witness Statement of YIP [redacted] at ***Appendix A-28*** refers.

[26] Although the time shown on CCTV was 1444 hours, the system was approximately 42 seconds ahead of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) reference time, making the actual time approximately 1443 hours.

[27] Witness statements from (i) HE [redacted], (ii) CHUNG [redacted], (iii) FANG [redacted], (iv) TAM [redacted] (v) CHAN [redacted], (vi) ZHENG [redacted], (vii) SUEN [redacted] and (viii) CHUNG [redacted] at ***Appendices A-4 to A-11*** refer.

5.1.4 According to the construction workers[28] who were working on the exterior wall scaffolding between 3/F and 6/F of Wang Cheong House, they noticed the smell of smoke and observed a fire on the subject flat roof. One of the workers on the scaffolding on 4/F reported that the fire spread along the safety net from below[29]. In response, some of them attempted to put out the fire using a hose and buckets of water, but to no avail. This action was evidenced by CCTV footage from Wang Cheong House, which recorded someone shouting[30] '喂! 著火呀! 拎條水喉嚟呀!' at approximately 1448 hours[31].

5.1.5 Furthermore, the security guard, Ms. CHUNG [redacted][32], attempted to activate the fire alarm using the break glass unit on the 1/F of Wang Cheong House after discovering the fire at 1448 hours. However, her attempt was unsuccessful and no alarm sound was triggered.

5.1.6 According to the statement provided by the occupant of Flat 21[redacted], she and her neighbour noticed a burning smell as early as 1430 hours.

5.1.7 Given that multiple witnesses had likely become aware of the fire before it was reported by the informant, Mr. YIP, at 1451 hours, the IFITF considers that, had an emergency call been made immediately upon these earlier observations, the initial FS attendance could have been mobilised to the scene sooner. Such earlier mobilisation might have enabled firefighting operations to commence when the fire was at a comparatively earlier stage of development, with a corresponding potential to limit subsequent fire spread. Given the extremely rapid development of the fire, as later evidenced by the vertical spread along the re-entrants and the early multi-storey involvement within minutes, the IFITF further considers that, in such circumstances, even a difference of a few minutes in the timing of the first emergency call may critically affect the stage at which firefighting operations can commence and, consequently, the prospects of limiting further fire spread.

5.1.8 In conclusion, although the fire was first reported at 1451 hours, evidence from witnesses and CCTV footages indicates that it started earlier, likely between 1430 hours and 1443 hours. Despite extensive efforts, the exact time of the fire's occurrence could not be definitively determined.

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28 Witness statements of construction workers at ***Appendices A-4 to A-9*** refer.

29 Witness statement of HE [redacted] at ***Appendix A-4*** refers.

30 The CCTV camera was not aimed in a way that could capture the individual(s) involved, resulting in no one appearing in the footage.

31 Although the time shown on CCTV was 1447 hours, the system was approximately 44 seconds behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1448 hours.

32 Witness statement of CHUNG [redacted] at ***Appendix A-11*** refers.


*Figure 5-1: Map Indicating the Informant's Location*

*Photo 5-1:*
*Screenshot from the Informant's Video at about 1451 hours (Discovery)*

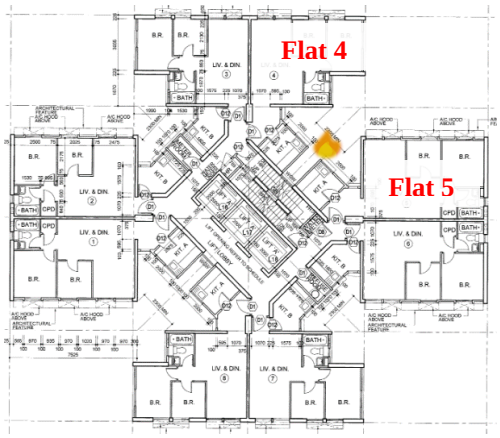


*Figure 5-2:*
*Layout Plan Showing the Fire Origin*


*Photo 5-2: Embers Falling onto Bicycle Parking Area*

## 5.2 Spread of the Fire

### 5.2.1 Background

5.2.1.1 To facilitate the analysis of fire spread, the different façades of Wang Cheong House are presented by direction (North Re-entrant, North-east façade, East Re-entrant, South-east façade, South Re-entrant, South-west façade, West Re-entrant, North-west façade) (as shown in **Figure 5-3**).

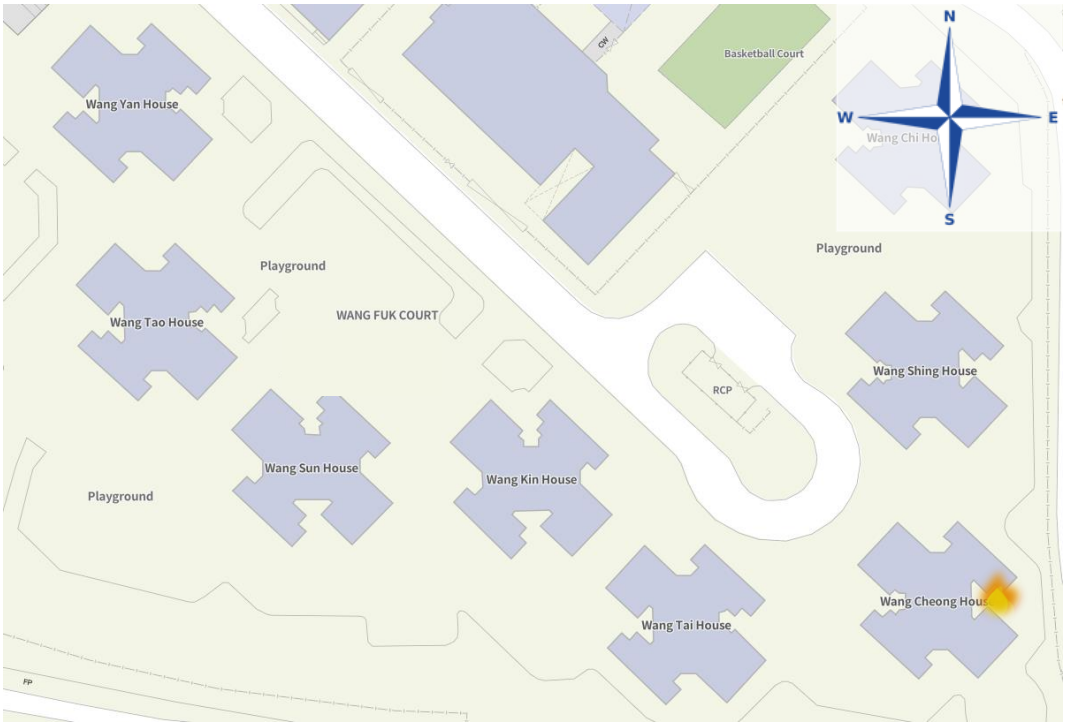


*Figure 5-3: Directional Representation of Wang Cheong House Façades*

### 5.2.2 **Wang Cheong House**

5.2.2.1 The video provided by the informant clearly showed the fire spreading through the **east re-entrant** of Wang Cheong House. **Photo 5-3** illustrates the fire spreading to about 4/F at about 1455 hours; while **Photo 5-4** shows the fire spreading to about 8/F at about 1457[33] hours, shortly after the FS arrival at 1456 hours.

5.2.2.2 At 1458 hours, the fire intensified and developed vigorously, accompanied by falling debris, bamboo, and construction materials (as shown in **Photos 5-5 (a) to (c)**).

5.2.2.3 A severe fire was then observed on the open ground outside the **south-east façades** of Wang Cheong House at approximately 1501 hours, indicating that the fire had spread beyond the building (as shown in **Figure 5-4** and **Photos 5-6 (a) & (b)**).

5.2.2.4 Although the fire at the lower portion of the scaffolding on the **south-east façade** was observed to have died out at approximately 1508 hours, visible flames were still present on the open ground outside the **east re-entrant**. Video footage provided by the informant clearly shows that the fire had spread to the open ground outside the **south-west façades** of Wang Cheong House, in the area between Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, at about 1508 hours (as shown in **Figure 5-5** and **Photos 5-6 (c) & (d)**). At the same time, heavy smoke was observed pouring along the **south re-entrant** and drifting towards Wang Tai House, likely under the influence of wind[34], as shown in **Figure 5-6** and **Photo 5-6 (e)**.

5.2.2.5 At about 1510 hours, the fire had spread to the units on the lower portion of the **south-east façade** of Wang Cheong House, as illustrated in **Figure 5-7**.

5.2.2.6 At about 1511[35] hours, a video provided by Tai Po District Councilor Mr. LO Hiu-fung, MH, showed the fire rapidly spreading from the G/F to the top of the building along the **west re-entrant** of Wang Cheong House (as shown in **Figure 5-8** and **Photo 5-7 (a)**).

5.2.2.7 At 1515 hours, another video provided by the informant showed that the scaffolding on the **south-east façade of Wang Tai House** was alight, and that **an area of vegetation** opposite Wang Cheong House, across Island House Lane, was also on fire, as shown in **Figure 5-9** and **Photos 5-7 (b) & (c)**. Meanwhile, the blaze in the area between Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House remained severe.

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33 No time discrepancy was noted between the informant's phone time and the HKO reference time.

34 An east to south-east wind, at approximately 14 km/h, was recorded by HKO at 1500 hours on 26.11.2025.

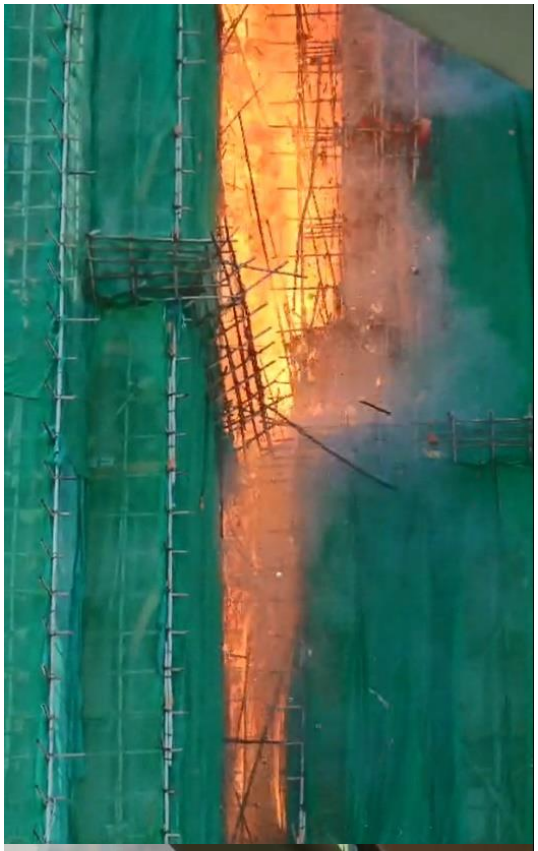
35 No time discrepancy was noted between Mr. LO's phone time and the HKO reference time.

5.2.2.8 The scaffolding of Wang Cheong House was well alight, with large quantities of burning bamboo and miscellaneous materials falling and obstructing the building entrances. As a result, firefighters were unable to enter the building and could only carry out external firefighting operations outside Wang Cheong House.

5.2.2.9 As captured on Now TV footage, the fire was emerging from broken windows on the lower floors of the **north-west façade** of Wang Cheong House at approximately 1545 hours (as shown in **Photo 5-8** and **Figure 5-10**).

*Photo 5-3:*
*Fire Spread to about 4/F*
*at about 1455 hours*

*Photo 5-4:*
*Fire Spread to about 8/F*
*at about 1457 hours*



*Photos 5-5 (a) to (c) :*
*Fire Intensified and Engulfed the Entire East Re-entrant of Wang Cheong House with Falling Debris at 1458 hours*


*Photos 5-6 (a) & (b): Fire Spread to the Open Ground outside the South-east Façades of Wang Cheong House at about 1501 hours*

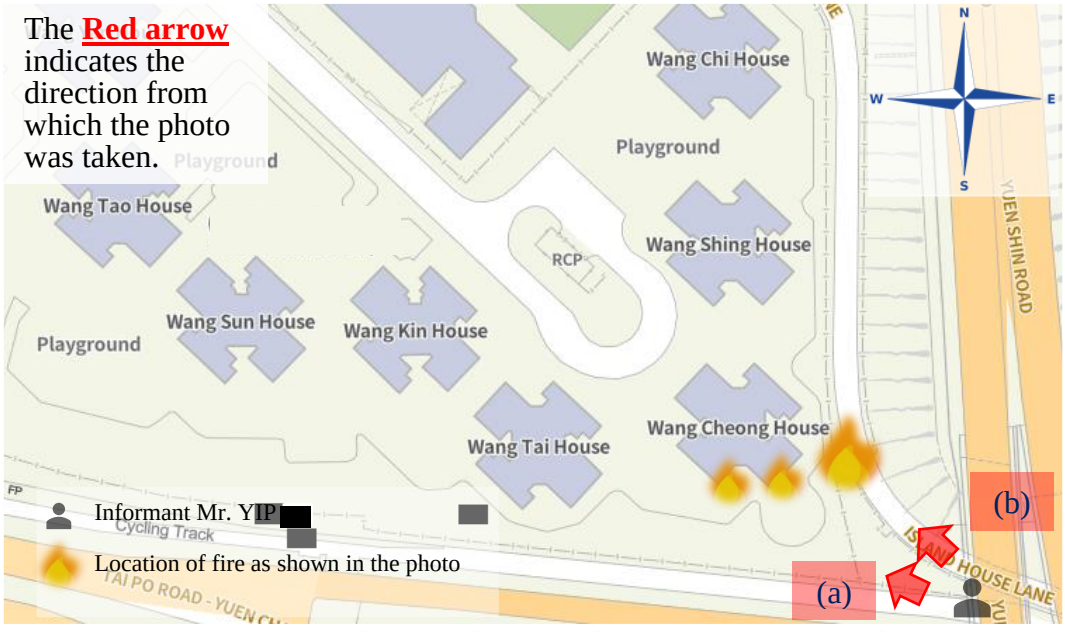



*Figure 5-4: Map Showing the Recording Location at 1501 hours*


*Photo 5-6 (c):*
*Visible Flame still Observed at the Open Ground outside the East Re-entrant at 1508 hours*


*Photo 5-6 (d):*
*Fire Spread to the Open Ground between Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House*

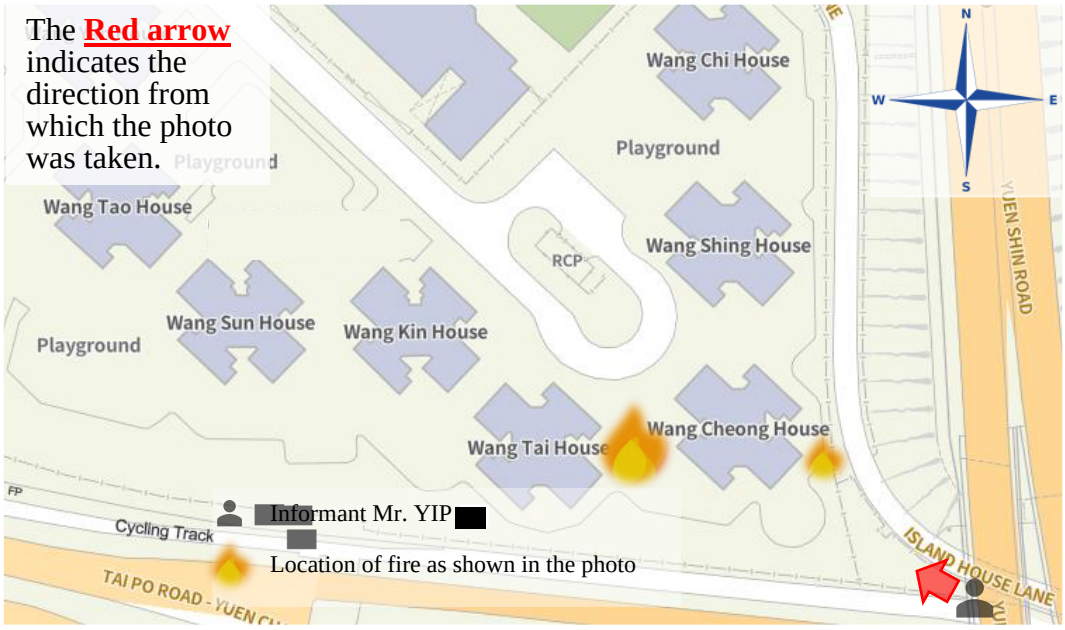



*Figure 5-5: Map Showing the Recording Location at 1508 hours*

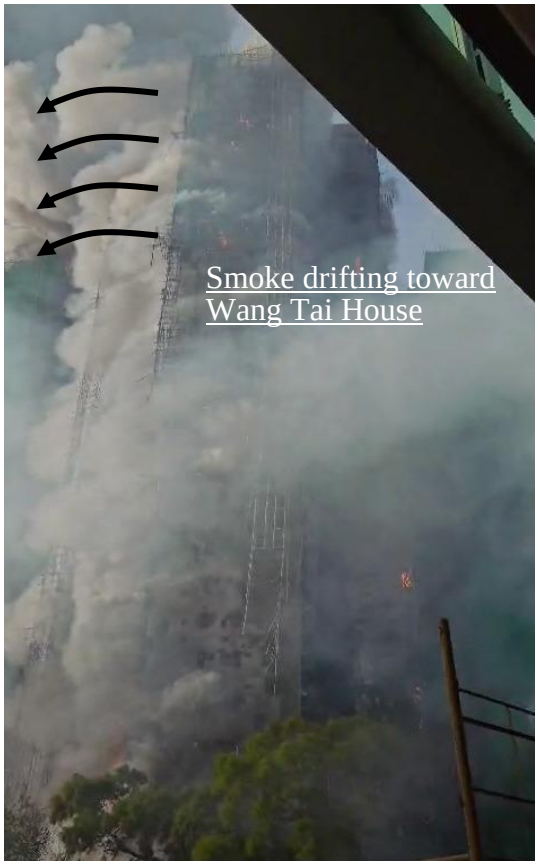



*Photo 5-6 (e):*
*Heavy Smoke on the South-east Façade at 1508 hours*

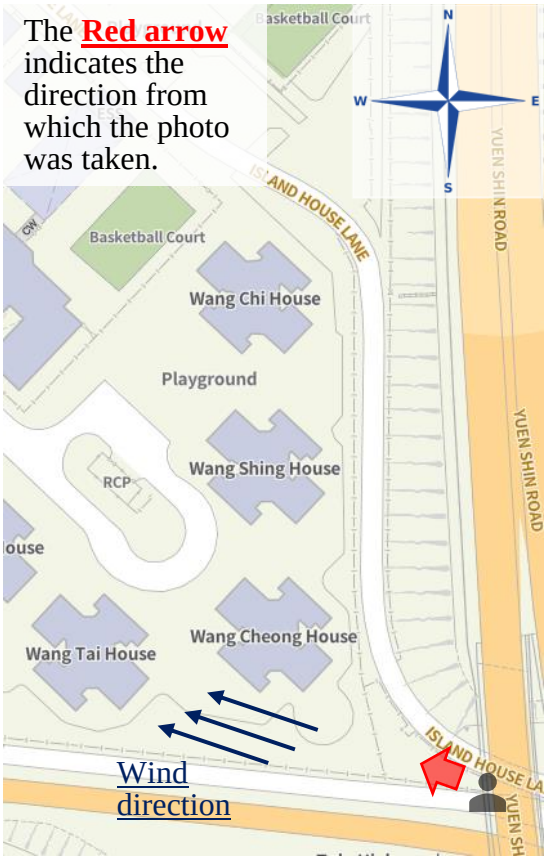



*Figure 5-6:*
*Map Showing the Recording Location at 1508 hours*

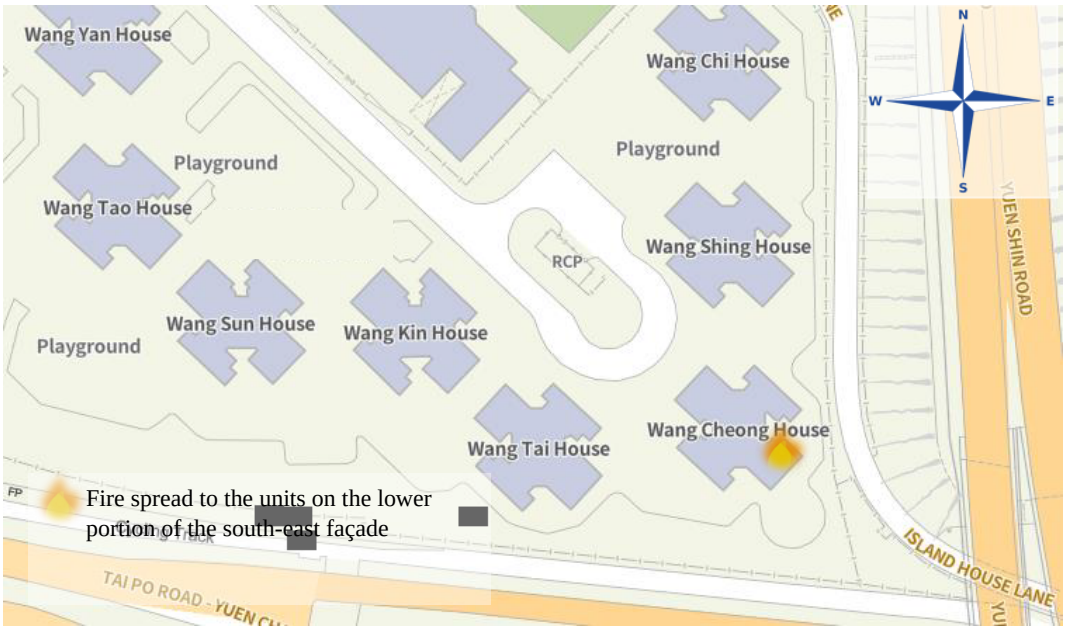



*Figure 5-7: Location of Fire Spread at 1510 hours*

*Photo 5-7 (a):*
*Fire Spreading along the West Re-entrant at 1511 hours*


*Figure 5-8:*
*Map Indicating the Fire Spread at Wang Cheong House*

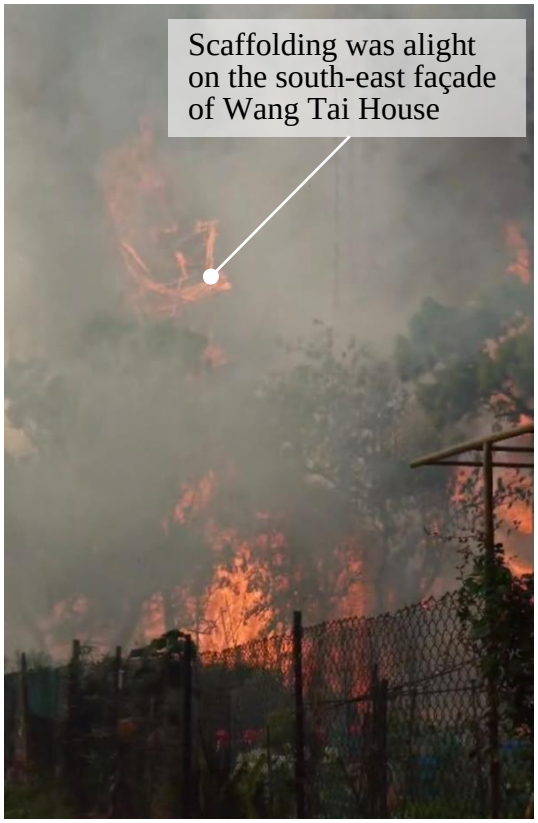



*Photo 5-7 (b):*
*South-east Façade of Wang Tai House Alight at 1515 hours*

*Photo 5-7 (c):*
*An Area of Vegetation opposite Wang Cheong House Alight at 1515 hours*

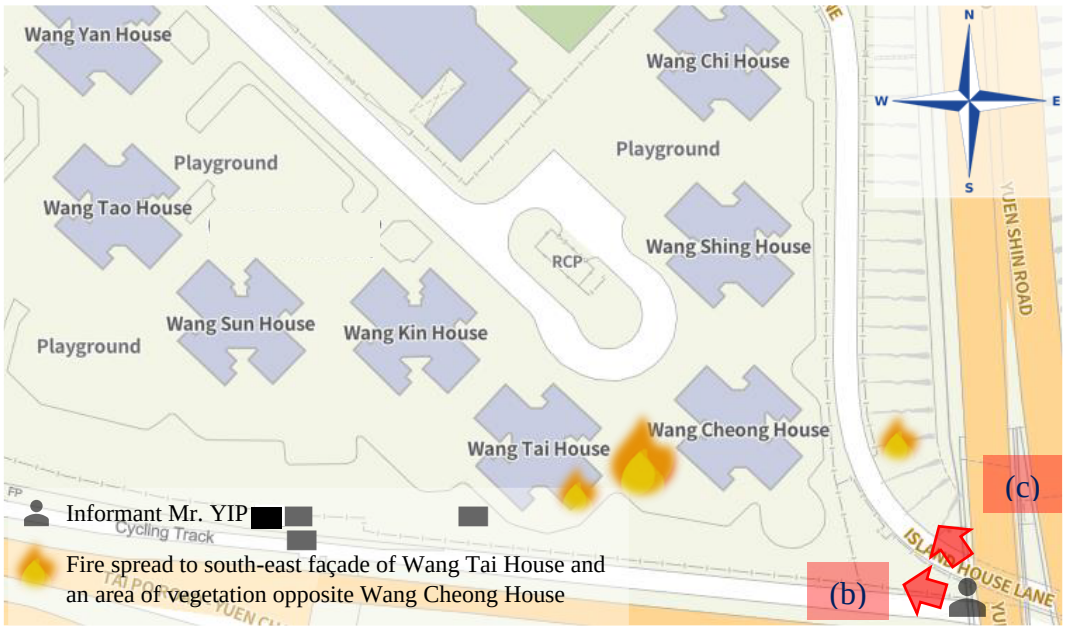



*Figure 5-9: Map Showing the Recording Location at 1515 hours*

*Photo 5-8:*
*Fire Spread into the Unit of Wang Cheong House at 1545 hours*

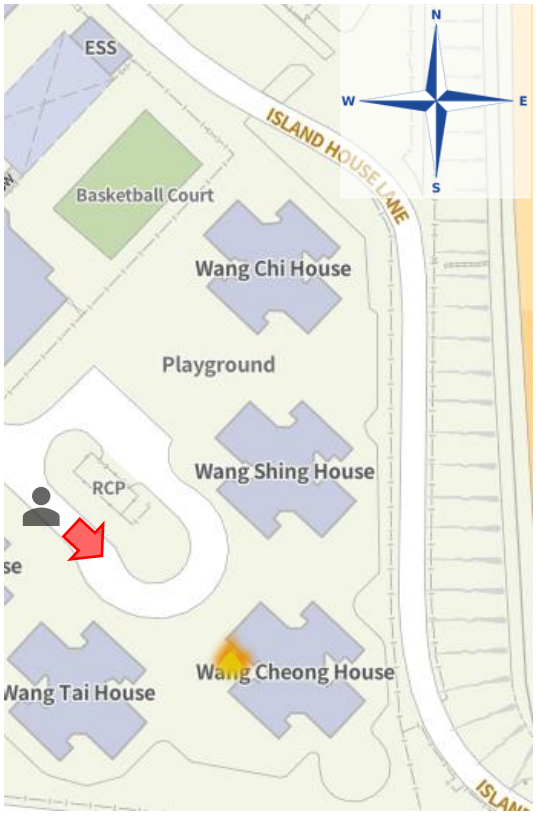



*Figure 5-10:*
*Map Showing the Recoding Location at 1545 hours*

### 5.2.3 Wang Tai House

5.2.3.1 The fire spread to Wang Tai House via flying embers was observed around 1500 hours. Construction workers[36] reported fire spreading to the safety net on multiple levels of Wang Tai House, including construction materials on G/F, safety nets on 9/F & 10/F and miscellaneous articles on R/F. The situation at R/F is shown in **Photo 5-9 (a)**; while the situation at the scaffolding is shown in **Photo 5-9 (b)**.

5.2.3.2 A similar observation was reported by SStnO HUI Kin-on[37], the initial officer-in-charge of the fire incident, who noted the fire spreading to the safety nets on the **east façade** of Wang Tai House, facing Wang Cheong House at approximately 1500 hours (as shown in **Figure 5-11**).

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36 Witness statements from (i) POON [redacted], (ii) CHAN [redacted], (iii) HUI [redacted] and (iv) CHEN [redacted] at ***Appendices A-13 to A-16*** refer.

37 Witness statement of SStnO HUI at ***Appendix A-29 refers***.

5.2.3.3 In addition to witness accounts, CCTV footage provided clear evidence of the fire spreading to Wang Tai House. At approximately 1509 hours[38], embers were observed falling onto the open ground in between Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, igniting nearby combustibles within the next three minutes. By 1516 hours, the area was obstructed by fallen burning bamboo debris (as shown in **Photos 5-9 (c) to (e)** and **Figure 5-12**).

5.2.3.4 As elaborated in paragraph 5.2.2.7, another video provided by the informant shows that at approximately 1515 hours, the scaffolding on the **south-east façade** of Wang Tai House, facing the cycling path, was alight (as shown in **Figure 5-9** and **Photo 5-7 (b)**).

5.2.3.5 Rapid vertical fire spread along the re-entrant was observed in two out of the four re-entrants of Wang Tai House (as shown in **Photos 5-10 (a) & (b)** and **Figure 5-13**). The first instance of vertical fire spread occurred along the **east re-entrant** of Wang Tai House at about 1516 hours (as shown in **Photo 5-10 (a)**). Shortly thereafter, a second instance of vertical fire spread was observed along the **south re-entrant** at about 1517 hours (as shown in **Photo 5-10 (b)**).

5.2.3.6 It is noteworthy that FS arrived at 1456 hours. Within 20 minutes, the fire had rapidly spread from its point of origin on the flat roof of Wang Cheong House to multiple locations. The fire extended to the open ground surrounding Wang Cheong House, multiple façade of the building and different re-entrant spaces. It also spread into the residential units of Wang Cheong House. The blaze then progressed across buildings, reaching Wang Tai House and its re-entrant areas. The situation was further exacerbated by flying scaffolding debris falling from the building, which blocked entrances and significantly obstructed firefighting efforts.

5.2.3.7 According to available materials, it was captured in the Cable TV footage that flames, originating from the ignited units, were observed issuing from the upper and mid-levels of the **south-west façade** of Wang Tai House at approximately 1553 hours (as shown in **Photo 5-11**).

[38] Although the time shown on CCTV was 1510 hours, the system was approximately 61 seconds ahead of the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1509 hours.


*Photo 5-9 (a): Flying Embers Observed on the R/F of Wang Tai House at about 1458 hours*[39]


*Photo 5-9 (b): A Reflection of the Fire was Captured by CCTV Installed on the Scaffolding of Wang Tai House at about 1503 hours*[40]


*Figure 5-11: Fire Spreading to the Safety Nets of Wang Tai House*

39 Although the time shown on CCTV was 1457 hours, the system was approximately 44 seconds behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1458 hours.

40 Although the time shown on CCTV was 1502 hours, the system was approximately 44 seconds behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1501 hours.


*Photo 5-9 (c): Embers Falling onto the Open Ground outside Wang Tai House*


*Photo 5-9 (d): Flaming Fire Observed*


*Photo 5-9 (e): Burning Bamboo Debris Piled up*

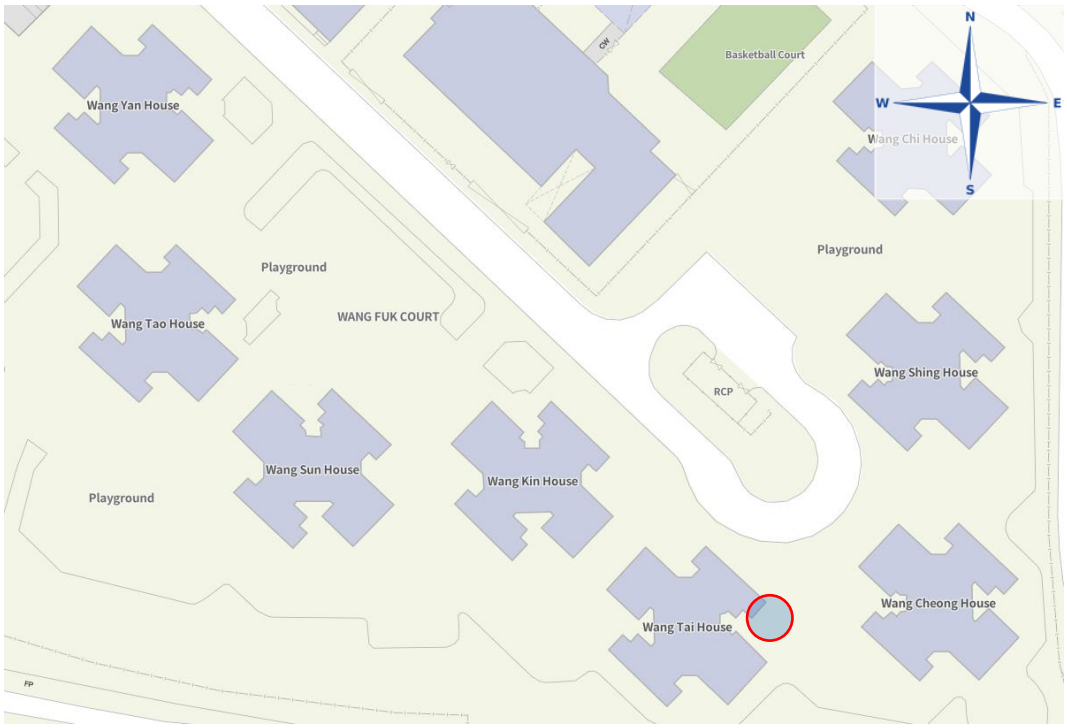


*Figure 5-12: Map Indicating the Footage Location*

*Photo 5-10 (a):*
*Fire Spread along the East Re-entrant of Wang Tai House at 1516 hours*


*Photo 5-10 (b):*
*Fire Spread along the South Re-entrant of Wang Tai House at 1517 hours*


*Figure 5-13: Map Indicating the Fire Spread along Re-entrants at Wang Tai House*


*Photo 5-11: Flames from Ignited Units on the South-west Façade of Wang Tai House*

### 5.2.4 Other Buildings in Wang Fuk Court

5.2.4.1 During the fire, seven out of the eight buildings in the Wang Fuk Court were set ablaze. In addition to Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, which have been detailed above, observations from frontline personnel suggest that the fire likely spread to the surrounding buildings in the following sequence:

| | Building | Time of Spread |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Wang Shing House | 15:20 hours |
| 2. | Wang Kin House | 15:25 hours |
| 3. | Wang Sun House | 15:25 hours |
| 4. | Wang Tao House | 15:39 hours |
| 5. | Wang Yan House | 16:04 hours |

5.2.4.2 In addition to the buildings of Wang Fuk Court, Mr. TSANG [redacted][41], a construction worker outside Flat 16[redacted] of Wang Chi House, observed at an estimated time of 1500 hours a black, burning object with apparent weight falling from either Wang Cheong House or Wang Shing House. This burning object landed on the construction waste collection point of Wang Fuk Court, igniting the materials (as shown in **Figure 5-14**). This observation highlights the significant role of embers in contributing to the spread of the fire. The embers carried by wind or falling debris, acted as ignition sources, could spark secondary fires in different areas and accelerating the overall fire spread across multiple locations in the housing estate.

5.2.4.3 Another notable phenomenon observed during the fire was the rapid fire development within the re-entrants of Wang Cheong House, Wang Tai House, Wang Shing House, Wang Tao House, Wang Sun House, and Wang Yan House, as shown in **Figure 5-15**. This facilitated the rapid vertical spread of the fire across multiple levels. A detailed discussion would be provided in section 6.2.1.

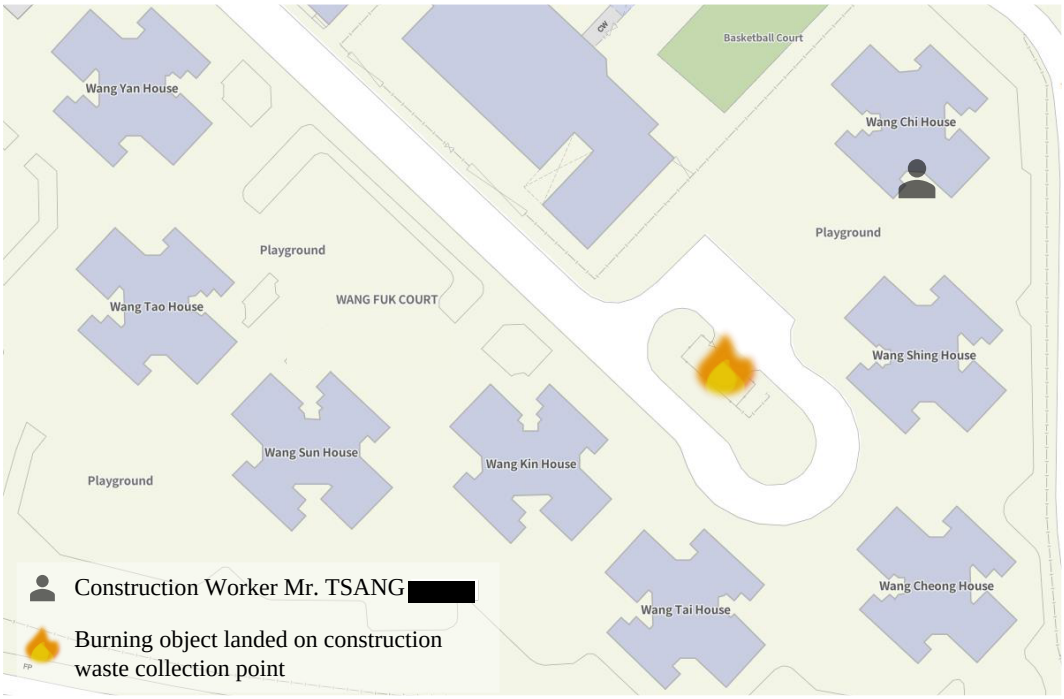


*Figure 5-14: Fire Spread to the Construction Waste Collection Point*

41 Witness Statement of TSANG [redacted] at ***Appendix A-23*** refers.


*Figure 5-15: Rapid Fire Spread along the Re-entrants*

## 5.3 Post-fire Stage

5.3.1 Across the seven affected buildings, a total of 1,736 flats were assessed, of which the interior of 924 flats sustained varying degrees of fire damage, while the interior of the other 812 flats remained relatively unaffected despite the exterior of the buildings have been damaged by the high temperature with prolonged exposure to fire. The post fire conditions of the exterior of Wang Fuk Court are shown in **Photo 5-12**.

5.3.2 Over 50% of the interior of the flats in Wang Tai House, Wang Sun House, and Wang Cheong House were severely damaged by fire. Details of the damage analysis are set out in ***Appendix A-17***.

5.3.3 Although the interior of many flats in the other buildings sustained minimal or no damage from fire, seven out of the eight blocks (except for Wang Chi House) in Wang Fuk Court sustained varying degrees of fire damage. The post-fire exterior and interior photos of Wang Fuk Court are at ***Appendices A-25 & A-26***.

5.3.4 Apart from the physical condition of the interior of individual flats sustaining fire damage as explained in paragraphs 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 above, the seven affected buildings have been exposed to the fire as well as the water for firefighting for a prolonged period, hence, the building façade and structure as well as the building services systems such as lifts, electricity supply system, telecommunication system, water and gas supply system, drainage system, etc. have suffered severe damages. Therefore, the figures and information about the residential flats in paragraphs 5.3.1 to 5.3.3 are only recording the observations of the interior condition of the flats, but not the assessment on the overall habitability of the concerned flats and the entire Wang Fuk Court.

*Photo 5-12: Post Fire Condition of Wang Fuk Court*

## 5.4 Response by FSD

### 5.4.1 Initial Response

5.4.1.1 Initially, one Hydraulic Platform (HP), one Major Pump (MP), one Light Rescue Unit (LRU), one Turntable Ladder (TL) and one Ambulance (Amb) were dispatched to attend the incident in accordance with the PDA[42].

5.4.1.2 Meanwhile, under the Contingency Plan for Wang Fuk Court under Major Maintenance Works, one additional MP and one additional LRU were also dispatched to attend the incident.

5.4.1.3 Under a separate departmental policy[43], due to the shutdown of the building's FSI of at Wang Cheong House, one additional MP was dispatched to attend the incident upon receipt of the first fire call.

5.4.1.4 In summary, 1 HP, 3 MPs, 2 LRUs, 1 TL and 1 Amb were dispatched to attend the incident at the initial stage.

### 5.4.2 Incipient Stage of Fire

5.4.2.1 Upon receipt of more than one fire call at 1454 hours, a Search and Rescue (SAR)[44] team, comprising one HP and one LRU was also dispatched to attend the incident.

5.4.2.2 A MP, as Safety Support Team (SST)[45], was also dispatched to attend the incident; while a LRU was also dispatched to convey Station Commander (StnC), Fanling Fire Station (FLFStn), ADO CHOW Tsz-ho, to the incident.

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42 The PDA specifies the mandatory minimum response that the FSD must mobilize for a given type of incident. It includes the required ranks of officers, as well as the number and types of fire appliances and ambulances to be deployed in response to fire and special service incidents.

43 Paragraph 3.1.2 (a) of Departmental Policy Instructions / IV/ 4.2.16 "General Procedures for Handling Defective FSI/ FSI Shutdown" refers.

44 With a view to maximizing operational efficiency in multi-storey building fires when multiple fire calls or multiple assistance calls are received, or massive search and rescue/evacuation operation is anticipated, FSD has established a SAR strategy that involves deploying additional appliances beyond the initial attendance to ventilate staircases, perform search and rescue operations, and facilitate evacuation. Each SAR Team comprises one pumping appliance (either a HP or MP) and one rescue appliance (either a MRU or LRU). One RHP equipped with a Positive Pressure Ventilation Blower and one Amb will also be dispatched with the first SAR Team. When receiving the 4th assistance request, the FSCC will dispatch an additional SAR Team comprising two fire appliances, as well as one Mobile Command Unit, to attend the incident. An additional talk group is exclusively allocated for SAR operations.

45 SST assists the Incident Commander at strategic level to monitor the operational safety and provide safety advice to frontline members.

5.4.2.3 The Incident Commander was SStnO HUI Kin-on, riding as Officer-in-charge (Oic) of Tai Po (TP)/HP, whereas the SAR team leader was Station Officer (StnO) WONG Tak-fai, riding as Oic of Tai Po East (TPE)/HP. In addition, Probationary Station Officer (PStnO) MA Man-ho, riding as Oic of Fanling (FL)/MP, took up the duty as SST at the very initial stage.

5.4.2.4 At the incipient stage, 2 HPs, 4 MPs, 4 LRUs, 1 TL and 1 RHP with 61 FS members were dispatched to attend the incident, which equals to around 80% of required manpower deployment in a No.3 Alarm Fire (i.e. 79 FS members).

### 5.4.3 No.3 Alarm Fire

5.4.3.1 After the fire was raised to No.3 Alarm at 1502 hours, StnC Tai Po Fire Station, ADO CHEUNG Lok-hang, arrived at scene at 1519 hours and temporarily took over command until Deputy Divisional Commander (New Territories East) (DDC(NTE)) LAM Ho-chun took over command as per relevant PDA.

5.4.3.2 Specialists and specialised units were dispatched to attend the incident after the fire was raised to a No.3 Alarm magnitude:

- Compartment Fire Specialists;
- Communications Support Team
- Highrise Building Firefighting Specialists;
- Breathing Apparatus (BA) Unit;
- Tactical Support Unit; &
- Unmanned Aircraft System Team.

5.4.3.3 During the period of No.3 Alarm Fire, about 50 assistance calls from the public were received by FSCC. StnC FLFStn, ADO CHOW Tsz-ho, who arrived at scene at 1516 hours and subsequently assumed the duties of Rescue Officer, was responsible for the SAR operations at scene. In view of the overwhelming number of assistance calls, the Director of Fire Services (D of FS) YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy instructed the dispatch of 10 additional SAR teams which are 10 times of the usual deployment, each comprising 1 HP/MP and 1 MRU/LRU, to attend the incident.

5.4.3.4 Furthermore, at 1520 hours, D of FS instructed the mobilisation of about 80 uniformed members from non-operational units to set up a Support Centre with 18 dedicated telephone hotlines to collect updates on the conditions and locations of affected residents (as shown in **Photo 5-13**).

5.4.3.5 At 1548 hours, ADO(Safety) CHOI Ka-wing arrived at scene to oversee operational safety matters.

*Photo 5-13: Support Centre on 27.11.2025*

### 5.4.4 External Firefighting and Support

5.4.4.1 2 nos. of TL were deployed at this stage to suppress external fire spread to nearby buildings. The first TL arrived at the scene at 1504 hours and was positioned at the roundabout inside the Wang Fuk Court whereas the second TL arrived at the scene at 1523 hours and was positioned at Tai Po Road (Yuen Chau Tsai).

5.4.4.2 At 1600 hours, Water Supplies Department was requested to increase the flow or pressure in the water mains in the vicinity to secure the water supply to fire appliances. Numerous portable pumps were also deployed to increase the jet pressure.

5.4.4.3 To strengthen command and control, the Director's Command Post (DCP)[46] was activated at 1520 hours.

### 5.4.5 No.4 Alarm Fire

5.4.5.1 After the fire was raised to No.4 Alarm at 1534 hours, a total of 48 fire appliances, 13 Amb and 269 FS personnel, were dispatched to the scene. The manpower was about twice the PDA for a No. 5 Alarm Fire (i.e. 110 FS members). By 1534 hours, assistance calls from 35 units throughout Wang Fuk Court were received. By 1623 hours, assistance calls from 59 units throughout Wang Fuk Court were received.

[46] The DCP was established to monitor the fire ground situation, ensure timely deployment of resources and orderly progression of SAR operations, as well as provide coordination, liaison and logistical support.

5.4.5.2 After the fire was raised to No.4 Alarm, DCFO(NTN) WONG King-man, temporarily took over command at 1550 hours until CFO(NTN) TANG Wing-wah assumed command at 1618 hours as per relevant PDA. At that instance, DCFO(NTN) WONG King-man was immediately redeployed as the Rescue Officer. At 1630 hours, Divisional Officer (Safety) (DO(Safety)) Gerald KWOK arrived at scene and assumed the duties of overseeing operational safety at scene.

5.4.5.3 Within about an hour after the first report of fire, 3 TLs were deployed at scene. In view of operational needs, 3 additional TLs, which sum up to 6 TLs, were deployed within the following half hour, i.e. 1621 hours. By the conclusion of the incident, 8 TLs were deployed at strategic locations including the emergency vehicular access of Wang Fuk Court, Tai Po Road (Yuen Chau Tsai), Island House Lane and Yuen Shin Road.

5.4.5.4 At 1610 hours, DD(Ops) CHAN Derek Armstrong arrived at scene to facilitate high-level communications, observe the operational progress, provide on-site strategic advice/instructions and support. He instructed that each building be assigned with a Senior Officer to direct firefighting and, where necessary, simultaneously oversee SAR operations.

5.4.5.5 Meanwhile, at 1640 hours, DD(P&C) WONG Ka-wing arrived at the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) of the Security Bureau (SB) to oversee high-level communication and liaison with other Government Departments regarding the fire's latest development.

### 5.4.6 No.5 Alarm Fire (Peak Deployment)

5.4.6.1 DD(Ops) CHAN Derek Armstrong raised the fire to No.5 Alarm and immediately assumed overall command at 1822 hours. At this instance, 116 fire appliances, 55 ambulances and 718 FS personnel were dispatched to attend the incident.

5.4.6.2 At the same instance, assistance calls from 82 units had been received. In this regard, DCFO(Fire Safety) WONG Sze-lut, Sunny, was directed by DCP to attend at 1906 hours to facilitate the communication for SAR operations among the fire ground, FSCC and the Support Centre as a special arrangement. By the conclusion of the incident, more than 100 persons were rescued from various locations in Wang Fuk Court. In addition to attending all assistance calls at 347 different locations, all remaining units on all floors of the affected blocks were attended by FS members to check for possible casualties.

5.4.6.3 Under these exceptional circumstances, CFO(New Territories South)(NTS) YIU Men-yeung was dispatched to attend the incident at 1925 hours to oversee operational safety.

5.4.6.4 By 2100 hours, 22 Senior Officers and Directorate Officers, including the ranks of D of FS, DD, CFO, DCFO, SDO and DO from both operational and non-operational units, were in attendance and engaged in various roles. By 2230 hours, more than 980 FS personnel were dispatched to attend the incident, reflecting a **scale of mobilisation significantly greater than that of a typical fire incident**.

5.4.6.5 As a special relief arrangement at 0900 hours on 27.11.2025, coach services were employed to convey fresh manpower en-bloc from different fire stations to the scene for changeover.

5.4.6.6 A summary and comparison of the appliances and manpower deployed for this incident, relative to a typical No.5 Alarm Fire, is provided in the following table.

| Time | | Appliances Dispatched | Manning Dispatched | Relative to No.5 Alarm Fire PDA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1451 hrs** | Time of Call | | | |
| **1456 hrs** | Arrival | | | |
| **1502 hrs** | No.3 | 13 | 61 | |
| **1520 hrs** | | Set up DCP (deployed 10 additional SAR Teams) and Support Centre manned by about 80 staff | | |
| **1534 hrs** | No.4 | 61 | 269 | Appliance : 2.3 Times<br>Manning : 2.4 Times |
| **1822 hrs** | No.5 | 171 | 718 | Appliance : 6.6 Times<br>Manning : 6.5 Times |
| **2230 hrs** | | 221 | 989 | Appliance : 8.5 Times<br>Manning : 9 Times |

5.4.7 **Summary of Special Arrangements**

5.4.7.1 Given the complexity and challenges of the fire, the FSD recognized that the strategy could not rely solely on established action plans to address the situation. Instead, the strategy needed to adapt and respond dynamically as the incident evolved, the aforementioned special arrangements have been tabulated as below, those arrangements, not covered under existing procedures and guidelines, helped enhancing operational efficiency of frontline Officers:

| Special Arrangements | Details |
|---|---|
| **Early Activation of DCP** | • D of FS instructed the early activation of the DCP. |
| **Strengthening Command Structure** | • Senior Directorates were deployed to both the scene and the EMSC of SB to ensure seamless communication and coordination across all levels of the operation;<br>• DCFO WONG King-man was assigned by the Incident Commander to take on the role of Rescue Officer and oversee SAR operations, a role typically undertaken by the first attending ADO;<br>• DCFO WONG Sze-lut, Sunny was directed by DCP to the scene to facilitate the communication for SAR operations among the fire ground, FSCC and the Support Centre;<br>• CFO YIU Men-yeung was directed by DCP to the scene to monitor operational safety issues which would typically be undertaken by the Senior Officer of SPCU; and<br>• DD CHAN Derek Armstrong instructed that Senior Officers be assigned to lead firefighting operations and SAR operations for each affected building. |
| **Exceptional Resources Deployment** | • D of FS instructed FSCC to dispatch 10 additional SAR Teams;<br>• Mobilisation of about 80 uniformed members to establish a Support Centre. This was intended to manage the surge in assistance calls and alleviate the heavy workload of the FSCC;<br>• As at 2100 hours on 26.11.2025, a total of 22 Senior Officers and Directorate Officers, including the ranks of DO, SDO, DCFO, CFO, DD and D from both operational and non-operational units, were present at the scene. These officers played critical roles in commanding and coordinating the response to the fire. This arrangement is far beyond the PDA for a No.5 Alarm Fire; and<br>• Special relief arrangement was made by using coach services to convey the fresh manpower en-bloc from different fire stations to the scene for changeover. |

# Chapter 6 – Cause and Spread of Fire

## 6.1 Cause of Fire

6.1.1 Based on the available evidence, the fire is believed to have originated from the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House.

6.1.2 Neither traces of accelerants nor evidence of suspicious activity immediately prior to the fire were identified at the scene. Accordingly, a **deliberate act with the use of accelerant is considered unlikely** to be the cause of the fire.

6.1.3 According to the statements of the construction workers, at the material time, only mosaic tile installation work was being carried out in the vicinity. There was no indication at the scene of any welding process that could have generated molten metal droplets as a potential ignition source.

6.1.4 Excavations in the vicinity surrounding the suspected point of origin were carried out by the FSD. Subsequently, FSD, GL and EMSD conducted their independent investigations and follow-up examinations separately. All departments submitted their investigations in writing to the IFITF, which have been incorporated into this report and are attached in the appendices as follows:

- ***Appendix A-18***: Report from the Fire Investigation Team of FSD
- ***Appendix A-19***: Statement from Dr. LEE Wing-man of GL
- ***Appendix A-20***: Report from the Electricity Legislation Division (ELD) of EMSD
- ***Appendix A-21***: Report from the Gas Standards Office (GSO) of EMSD

6.1.5 Post-fire inspections conducted by the EMSD ruled out both electrical faults and Liquefied Petroleum Gas related causes as potential causes of the fire.

6.1.6 Debris up to 2m in height was located at the suspected point of origin (as shown in **Photo 6-1)**. After removing the burnt debris that had fallen from above during the fire, the debris at the bottom was examined and found to comprise various construction materials, including remnants of safety nets, toe-board, and polystyrene window covers (as shown in **Photo 6-2)**, two cigarette ends (one of which is shown in **Photo 6-3**), a woven plastic sack containing a collection of backing paper of mosaic tile and a substantial amount of burnt remnants of carton paper boxes (as shown in **Photo 6-4**). The combustible materials in the area could have served as fuel for the fire.

6.1.7 Among the materials found at the suspected point of origin, paper-based items such as carton paper boxes and the backing papers of mosaic tiles were susceptible to smouldering[47] when exposed to a glowing source, such as lit cigarettes.

6.1.8 Evidence of smoking was observed in multiple locations. Two cigarette ends were found at the affected flat roof. Additionally, numerous cigarette ends were discovered on the bamboo scaffolding of Wang Chi House, indicating that smoking and the improper disposal of cigarette ends were not uncommon practices in these areas (as shown in **Photos 6-5 (a) to (d)**). Further supporting this observation, CCTV footage captured construction workers smoking on the R/F of Wang Cheong House (as shown in **Photos 6-5 (e) & f))**.

6.1.9 On the day of the fire, the HKO issued a Red Fire Danger Warning[48], with relative humidity levels measured 40% to 50% between 1500 and 1800 hours. These low humidity levels reduced the moisture content in materials, rendering them more prone to combustion and more conducive to fire spread. The dry atmosphere also facilitated the development of smouldering fires, which may initially go unnoticed, but could later develop into open flames, thereby further contributing to the fire's extensive spread.

6.1.10 No other sources of ignition could be identified at the suspected point of origin. As such, with no contradictory evidence suggesting otherwise, the IFITF was satisfied that the fire was most likely accidental in nature. Most probably: A glowing source, such as a lit cigarette end, ignited the combustible materials, such as carton paper boxes, at the scene.

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47 Unlike flaming combustion which produces visible flames, smouldering fire occurs when materials burn slowly without enough oxygen to sustain a flame. A smouldering fire can persist unnoticed for hours or even days, and may later reignite into open flames when conditions become favourable.

48 The Fire Danger Warning System aims at alerting the public to conditions in which fires may start and spread easily. The chance of fire outbreaks when fire danger warnings are issued is much higher than the average. The Red Fire Danger Warning will be issued when the fire risk is extreme. The issuance of warnings are based on: (a) weather conditions favouring the occurrence and spread of fires, such as low humidity and high wind speed; and (b) information on the dryness of vegetation supplied by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department.

*Photo 6-1: Debris Piled up on the Flat Roof outside Flats 104 and 105*

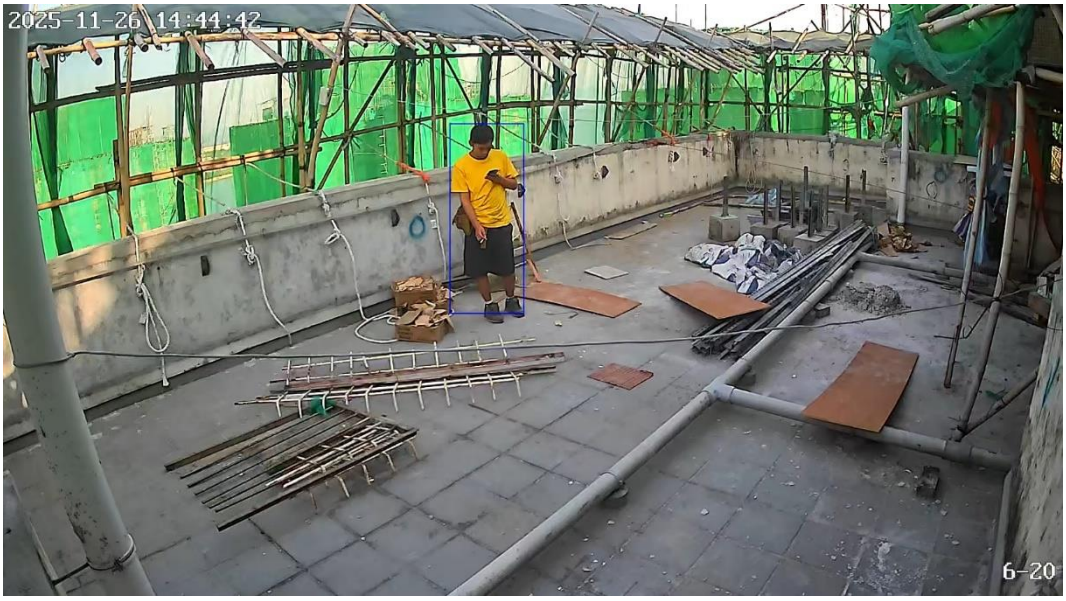
*Photo 6-2: Polystyrene Window Covers Found at the Suspected Fire Origin*

*Photo 6-3: One of the Cigarette Ends Found at the Subject Flat Roof*

*Photo 6-4: Burnt Remnants of Carton Paper Boxes*


*Photos 6-5 (a) & (b): Cigarette Ends Found on the First Level Scaffolding at Wang Chi House*


*Photos 6-5 (c) & (d): Cigarette Boxes Found on the First Level Scaffolding at Wang Chi House*


*Photos 6-5 (e) & (f): Construction Workers were Smoking on R/F of Wang Cheong House at about 1411 hours and 1445 hours*[49]

[49] Although the times shown on the CCTV were 1410 hours and 1444 hours respectively, the system was approximately 44 seconds behind the HKO reference time, making the actual times approximately 1411 hours and 1445 hours.

## 6.2 Hypothesis on Spread of Fire

### 6.2.1 Rapid Vertical Fire Spread

6.2.1.1 As outlined in section 6.1, the fire was believed to have originated from the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House. Initially mild, the fire rapidly intensified, spreading uncontrollably along the vertical re-entrant filled with combustibles, eventually engulfing the entire re-entrant.

6.2.1.2 Fires typically self-limit when fuel near the ignition point is depleted. However, external fire spread can occur rapidly when combustible materials are present on building façades or in surrounding areas.

6.2.1.3 In this case, the re-entrant's significant fuel load sustained the fire's progression. Combustible materials included:

- bamboo scaffolding,
- safety nets,
- wooden planks,
- toe-boards,
- canvas,
- nylon strips; and
- polystyrene window covers.

These materials provided a continuous fuel source across multiple levels, enabling rapid vertical fire spread (as shown in **Photos 6-6 (a) & (b)**).

6.2.1.4 Convection heat transfer played a critical role in the fire's rapid spread. The hot gases (comprising pyrolyzed gases[50] and gaseous combustion products, mixed with surrounding air) rose due to density differences, efficiently transferring heat.

6.2.1.5 Rising hot smoke and gases carried embers and particles upward, igniting combustible materials along the pathway. This process intensified the fire by creating a feedback mechanism, where higher temperatures further accelerated the blaze.

[50] Pyrolysis is the thermal decomposition of a material caused by high temperatures. This process breaks down the material's structure, releasing gases as by-products and leaving behind char, a carbon-rich solid residue. These gases, known as pyrolyzed gases, are often highly flammable and can ignite when mixed with the right amount of air and exposed to a heat source.

6.2.1.6 The vertical re-entrant, like other structural shafts such as lift shafts and light wells, naturally channelled rising smoke and hot gases. Its chimney-like configuration confined and directed their upward movement, allowing the fire to spread rapidly and engulf multiple floors in a short timeframe.

6.2.1.7 Winds[51] blowing into the re-entrant further intensified the fire by supplying abundant oxygen, accelerating the upward spread.

6.2.1.8 The construction materials collected at scene were examined by both GL and fire engineering professionals. The detailed examination reports are attached in ***Appendix A-3***. A summary of key findings is tabulated in the following table.

| *Materials* | *Key Findings* | *Examined by* |
|---|---|---|
| ***Safety nets*** | Upon the removal of ignition source,<br>• 11 out of 15 samples were found to sustain flaming combustion for more than 4 seconds[52];<br>• Burning droplets were observed in 6 samples. | GL<br>***Appendices A3-1 & A-19*** |
| ***Polystyrene window covers*** | The observed burning behaviour:<br>• the cover is readily ignitable with a naked flame<br>• Burning droplets, which could serve as a source of secondary ignition, were observed. | GL<br>***Appendix A3-2*** |
| ***Canvas*** | (To be provided in the final report) | |
| ***Toe-boards*** | (To be provided in the final report) | |

6.2.1.9 Test results from GL indicated that 11 out of 15 safety net samples sustained flaming combustion for more than 4 seconds, which suggests that the nets may not meet the requirements outlined in Clause 5.1.12 and Clause 5.2.2.9 of GB5725-2009. Additionally, 6 samples showed the generation of burning droplets, which could contribute to fire spread if they fell onto other combustible materials. [53]

[51] An east to south-east wind, at approximately 14 km/h, was recorded by HKO at 1500 hours on 26.11.2025.

[52] The sample was found to sustain flaming combustion for more than 4 seconds, either in the longitudinal direction, the transverse direction or both.

[53] By the completion of the interim report, a limited number of samples had been tested to gain a preliminary understanding of the fire-retardant (FR) properties of the safety nets at Wang Fuk Court. A comprehensive analysis will be provided in the final report.

6.2.1.10 Similar rapid vertical fire spread within the re-entrant was observed in other buildings.

6.2.1.11 Cable TV footages provided a clear view of the fire spreading through the re-entrant of Wang Tao House, showing that the rapid vertical fire spread was likely caused by the ignition of pyrolyzed gases, generated from the pyrolysis of combustible materials (such as bamboo scaffolding, safety nets, wooden planks, toe-boards and polystyrene window covers), which had accumulated within the re-entrant (as shown in **Photos 6-7 (a) to (e)**).

*Photos 6-6 (a) & (b): Continuous Fuel Source in the Re-entrant*


*Photo 6-7 (a): The Re-entrant of Wang Tao House Remained Unaffected in 1600 hours*

*Photo 6-7 (b): Flying Embers Spreading from Wang Sun House to Wang Tao House*

*Photo 6-7 (c): Suspected Pyrolyzed Gases from Combustibles Accumulated in the Re-entrant*

*Photo 6-7 (d): Flaming Fire Observed in the Lower Portion of Wang Tao House*


*Photo 6-7 (e): Fire Spread Vertically throughout Wang Tao House*

### 6.2.2 Fire Spread into Units

6.2.2.1 As previously discussed in paragraphs 5.2.2.5, 5.2.2.9 and 5.2.3.7, it is observed that fire had spread into different units of Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House over a short duration. While the ignition of combustible materials inside the domestic units could possibly be attributed to radiation[54], it is more likely that the fire was spread from the building's exterior to its interior through openings such as broken or open windows.

6.2.2.2 Once inside domestic units, the fire encountered a wide range of combustible materials, including furniture, curtains, bedding, clothing, paper, plastics, and electronic appliances. These materials provided abundant fuel sources, allowing the fire to grow rapidly and sustain itself for an extended period.

6.2.2.3 The enclosed nature of the domestic units further intensified the fire. As more items ignited, the temperature within the units rose, causing additional materials therein to reach their respective ignition temperatures. This chain reaction accelerated the fire development, enabling it to engulf the entire unit (as shown in **Photo 6-8**).

[54] Radiation: Heat that travel as invisible waves through the air. Radiated heat spreads in all directions and heats whatever it touches. Burning buildings can radiate heat to surrounding structures, sometimes even passing through glass windows and igniting objects inside.
(Source of Reference: NFPA
https://www.nfpa.org/es/about-nfpa/press-room/reporters-guide-to-fire/all-about-fire)

*Photo 6-8: Multiple Units on Fire at Wang Fuk Court*

### 6.2.3 Secondary Ignitions

6.2.3.1 Witness accounts and CCTV footage (as shown in **Photos 6-9 (a) & (b)**) revealed that **winds carried embers**—small, burning fragments of combustibles—to nearby structures, where they ignited safety nets, construction debris, and other combustible materials. These embers posed a significant risk as they could travel long distances, land on exposed surfaces, and ignite new fires far from the original source.

6.2.3.2 In addition to wind-driven embers, burning safety nets melted and dripped as **fire droplets** onto lower floors, serving as an ignition source for other combustible materials (as shown in **Photo 6-10**). **Falling debris** also contributed to the fire spread, igniting combustible materials on lower floors and at ground level.

6.2.3.3 At the time of the fire, the buildings in Wang Fuk Court were undergoing major renovation, which led to their external walls being surrounded by scaffolding and construction related materials. These materials included bamboo scaffolding, safety nets, polystyrene window covers, toe-boards, canvas, wooden planks, nylon strips, miscellaneous construction materials and debris (e.g. carton paper boxes and backing papers of mosaic tiles, etc.). Together, these materials created a combustible "envelope" enclosing the buildings and provided an abundant fuel source for the fire. This envelope allowed the ignition by the wind-driven embers, flaming droplets, and falling debris discussed in paragraphs 6.2.3.1 and 6.2.3.2.

6.2.3.4 Among these materials, the buildings in Wang Fuk Court were enclosed by safety nets. (as shown in **Photos 6-11 (a) & (b)**) In general, if these nets were made of FR materials, even if ignited, the fire would likely have self-extinguished[55] after the removal of heat source, thereby minimizing the risk of igniting other combustible materials and reducing the overall spread of the fire.

6.2.3.5 The presence of safety nets potentially lacking FR properties[56], combined with dry and windy conditions created an ideal environment for the fire to spread and for embers to spark additional fires.

6.2.3.6 As mentioned in paragraph 6.1.9, the HKO issued a Red Fire Danger Warning on the day of the fire. Between 1500 and 1800 hours, relative humidity levels were recorded at 40% to 50%. These low humidity levels significantly reduced the moisture content of materials, making them more susceptible to ignition and accelerating fire spread. The dry atmospheric conditions also facilitated the formation of smouldering fires, which could initially go unnoticed but later reignite, further contributing to the extensive spread of the fire.

6.2.3.7 Winds intensified the fire's progression by supplying additional oxygen to the flames, increasing the fire's heat, and causing it to grow more quickly and uncontrollably.

6.2.3.8 Winds further accelerated the fire's progression by carrying embers—burning fragments of construction materials—over considerable distances. These embers ignited combustible materials such as safety nets, construction debris, and other items on nearby buildings and structures. The resulting fires at multiple locations made firefighting efforts significantly more challenging and complicated deployment strategies.

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55 For instance, according to the testing requirement under GB5725-2009 standard for safety nets, any flaming combustion would be required to self-extinguish within 4 seconds after the removal of the external fire source which could significantly reduce the risk of fire spread.

56 To assess the fire performance of safety nets, Cone Calorimeter Analysis was conducted by fire engineering professionals to determine the fire behaviour of FR and non-FR safety nets. The test results, as detailed in ***Annex B of Appendix A-27***, suggested that the FR safety net exhibited a significantly longer time to ignition (76s-86s) compared with the non-FR safety net (46s-50s), representing a 40%-86% delay in ignition, while the FR safety net showed a slightly higher peak heat release rate than the non-FR sample. Further analysis indicated that the safety net sample collected from Wang Yan House by the fire engineering professionals demonstrated ignition characteristics (shorter time to ignition) and heat release rate behaviour (comparable peak heat release rate values) more similar to the non-FR safety net sample than to the FR sample.

6.2.3.9 The combination of potentially non-FR safety nets and other combustibles, together with low humidity and strong winds, accelerated the fire's spread. Wind-transported embers, dripping fire droplets, and falling debris continuously sparked new fires in surrounding areas. While some of these ignitions resulted in immediate visible flames, others may have caused smoldering fires—slow-burning, low-temperature fires that remained undetected. These smoldering fires posed a hidden danger, as they could persist unnoticed for hours or even days, and suddenly reignite into open flames when conditions became favorable, further complicating firefighting efforts.

*Photos 6-9 (a) & (b): Flying Embers Suspected Spreading from Wang Cheong House to Wang Tai House at about 1506 and 1511 hours*[57]

[57] Although the times shown on CCTV were 1507 and 1512 hours, the system was approximately 44 seconds behind the HKO reference time, making the actual times approximately 1506 and 1511 hours.

*Photo 6-10: Falling Fragments of Burning Safety Nets*

*Photos 6-11 (a) & (b): Buildings in Wang Fuk Court Enveloped by Safety Nets*

## 6.3 Validation of Hypothesis

### 6.3.1 Scientific Analysis and Validation

6.3.1.1 Various hypotheses detailed in the previous paragraphs require further verification and investigation.

6.3.1.2 In addition to the investigation methodologies outlined in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4, fire engineering professionals were engaged to perform Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) fire simulations and full-scale fire tests in Sichuan between late January and early February 2026 to investigate these phenomena.

6.3.1.3 At the Sichuan University of Science and Engineering (四川輕化工大學), a three-storey model replicating the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 was constructed. This model was used to conduct a series of full-scale fire tests, including experiments within a cone calorimeter setup to measure the heat release rate, observe glass behavior under fire, assess fire development, and study the impact of materials such as bamboo scaffolding, safety nets, polystyrene window covers, wooden planks, and toe-boards on fire spread[58]. In addition to providing visual observations of fire development under different scenarios, the data collected from the tests will be used to validate the CFD fire simulation results and serve as a foundation for further CFD simulations of different fire scenarios.

### 6.3.2 Full-Scale Fire Tests Setup

6.3.2.1 The three-storey model, approximately 9 m in height, was constructed within a mega-scale cone calorimeter (as shown in **Photo 6-12 (a)**). The model replicated the portion of the re-entrant outside Flats 4 and 5 from the 1/F to 3/F levels of Wang Cheong House (as shown in **Figure 6-1 (a) & (b)**). Scaffolding, fitted with either non-FR or FR[59] safety nets, was erected around the model, along with wooden planks and toe-boards included in the scaffolding setup (as shown in **Photos 6-12 (b) to (e)**).

6.3.2.2 Wood Cribs were used as the fire source in the tests (as shown in **Figure 6-2** and **Photos 6-13 (a) & (b)**).

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58 According to the Cone Calorimeter Analysis, the fire behaviour of bamboo, safety nets, polystyrene window covers, wooden planks, and toe boards used in the fire tests was broadly comparable to that of the materials recovered from the scene. Details are provided in ***Annex B of Appendix A-27***.

59 The fire-retardant safety net used in the tests conformed to BS 5867-2:2008.

*Photo 6-12 (a): The Mega-scale Cone Calorimeter*

*Figure 6-1(a): Replicated Portion of Wang Cheong House*

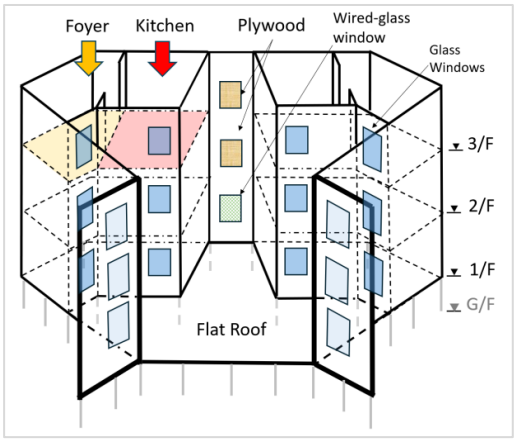


*Figure 6-1(b): Schematic of the Test Model*[60]

[60] Glass windows of six kitchens and six foyers were reconstructed to match the original layout; while staircase windows were fitted with either wired-glass panels or wooden boards

*Photo 6-12 (b):*
*Scaffolding Setup*

*Photo 6-12 (c):*
*External View with Safety Nets*

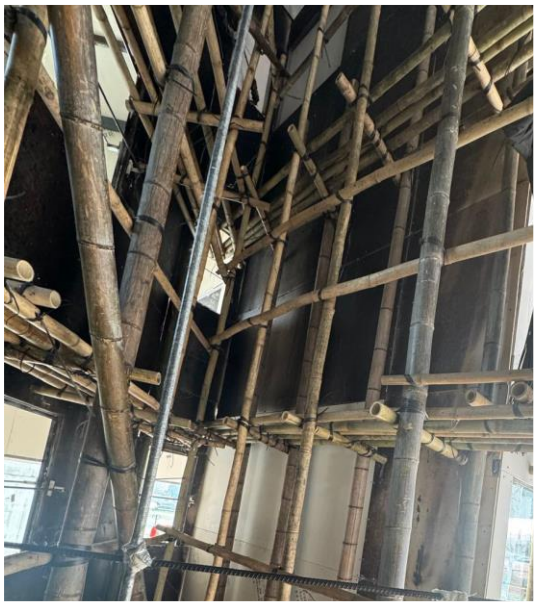

*Photo 6-12 (d):*
*Internal View of Scaffolding*


*Photo 6-12 (e):*
*Internal View with Safety Nets*

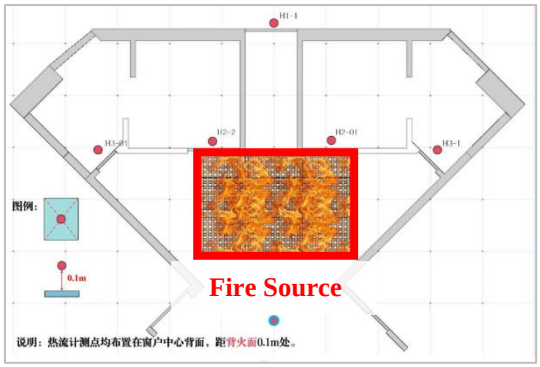


*Figure 6-2:*
*The Location of Fire Source at the Flat Roof of the Test Model*

*Photo 6-13 (a):*
*Setup of Wooden Cribs as Fire Source*

*Photo 6-13 (b):*
*Setup of Wooden Cribs in the Test*

### 6.3.3 Test Arrangement

6.3.3.1 Six fire test scenarios were conducted to evaluate the effects of fire size, safety nets, and polystyrene window covers on fire behavior. The details are as follows:

| Test | Fire Size (MW) | Safety Net | Polystyrene Covers |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | Below 1.5 | Non-FR | No |
| **2** | Below 1.5 | FR | No |
| **3** | 2.5 | Non-FR | No |
| **4** | 2.5 | FR | No |
| **5** | 2.5 | Non-FR | Yes |
| **6** | 2.5 | FR | Yes |

6.3.3.2 Visual observations and temperature data were recorded using cameras and thermocouples respectively, while the total heat release rate was measured by the mega-scale cone calorimeter.

6.3.3.3 As of the compilation of this fire investigation interim report, the results of the fire tests were still undergoing analysis; however, preliminary observations from Fire Tests 1 to 4 were included to provide an initial understanding of the fire spread mechanism. The raw test results are set out in the Preliminary Fire Engineering Expert Report of Prof. Richard Yuen, provided in ***Appendix A-27***, and are subject to further analysis.

### 6.3.4 Preliminary Observations of the Full-Scale Fire Tests

Comparison of Fire Spreading Behavior for Safety Nets with and without FR Properties under Small Fire Conditions (Heat Release Rate < 1.5 MW)

6.3.4.1 In Test 1, the fire spread to other materials on the scaffolding, including nylon strips, wooden planks and toe-boards, via the ignited the non-FR safety net (as shown in **Photos 6-14 (a) & (b)).** Although the fire source had burnt out, **localized ignition of the non-FR safety net persisted for over an hour**, with slow fire propagation continuing to **ignite other combustible materials on the scaffolding.** In Test 2, the **FR safety net either did not ignite or self-extinguished**. (as shown in **Photos 6-14 (c) & (d)**).

6.3.4.2 Key Observation (1):
The results indicate that FR safety nets significantly reduce the risk of ignition and fire propagation compared to non-FR safety nets under small fire conditions.

*Photo 6-14 (a):*
*Fire Spread to Wooden Plank in Test 1*

*Photo 6-14 (b):*
*Fire Spread along Non-FR Safety Net*


*Photo 6-14 (c) & (d): No Spread of Fire along FR Safety Net Observed*

Comparison of Fire Spreading Behaviour for Safety Nets with and without FR Properties under Relatively Large Fire Conditions (Heat Release Rate of about 2.5 MW)

6.3.4.3 In both Tests 3 and 4, relatively large fire source were used and most of the combustible materials within the re-entrant, including bamboo scaffolding, safety nets, toe-boards and wooden planks, were burnt by the end of the tests (as shown in **Photos 6-15 (a) & (b)**).

6.3.4.4 Key Observation (2):
The results indicate that when the fire size is sufficiently large, all combustible materials within the re-entrant are likely to be consumed by the fire, irrespective of whether a FR or non-FR safety net is used.

6.3.4.5 It is noteworthy that in Test 3, after the fire in the re-entrant area entered the decay stage, localized ignition of the non-FR safety net persisted. Slow propagation of small fire continued, eventually resulting in secondary ignitions at various locations on the scaffolding, occurring between 50 and 120 minutes after the re-entrant fire entered the decay stage (as shown in **Photo 6-16(a)**). Further details can be found in the timeline analysis in ***Appendix A-27 Annex C***.

6.3.4.6 The observation as mentioned in paragraph 6.3.4.5 was not noted in Test 4. Even though the FR safety net was ignited by embers or flaming construction materials, the fire self-extinguished once the external fire source diminished (as shown in **Photo 6-16(b)**).

6.3.4.7 Key Observation (3):
Secondary ignition can occur at a distance from the initial fire origin, even after the initial fire has burnt out, as non-FR safety nets sustained ignition and allowed fire to spread. However, such spread was not observed in tests conducted with FR safety nets, as the fire would generally self-extinguish once the external heat source was removed.

*Photo 6-15 (a):*
*Full Developed Fire in Test 3*
*(Non-FR Safety Net)*

*Photo 6-15 (b):*
*Full Developed Fire in Test 4*
*(FR Safety Net)*

*Photo 6-16 (a):*
*Secondary Ignition Occurred in Test 3*

*Photo 6-16 (b):*
*No Secondary Ignition Occurred in Test 4*

# Chapter 7 – Fatalities and Injuries Caused by the Fire

## 7.1 Background

7.1.1 The incident resulted in 79 injuries[61] and 168 fatalities[62], including one FS member, Senior Fireman (Posthumous)[63]18469 HO Wai-ho (as at the time of incident he was performing the duties of a Fireman, hereafter referred to as "Fn HO").

## 7.2 Circumstances Leading to the Fatality of Senior Fireman 18469 HO Wai-ho

7.2.1 Fn HO is a 37-year-old firefighter, who tragically sustained serious injuries and lost his life in the line of duty during the fire at Wang Fuk Court on 26.11.2025. This chapter outlines a detailed account of the circumstances that led to his fatality.

### 7.2.2 Sequence of Occurrences

7.2.2.1 On 26.11.2025, Fn HO was a crew member of Sha Tin (ST)/LRU. At about 1451 hours, ST/LRU was dispatched to attend the incident and arrived at scene at 1501 hours. Upon arrival, ST/LRU was initially assigned to assist ST/MP with laying hose.

7.2.2.2 At about 1503 hours, SStnO HUI Kin-on received a radio message from FSCC informing him of an assistance call at Room 2701 of Wang Cheong House. He then instructed PStnO LIAO Kong-lap (PStnO LIAO), who then instructed Fn HO and two other ST/LRU crew members, namely Fn [redacted] YEUNG Ching (Fn YEUNG) and Fn [redacted] SIU Tsz-ho (Fn SIU) to respond to the aforesaid assistance call.

7.2.2.3 While heading from ST/LRU to Wang Cheong House and passing through the bicycle parking area (as indicated "1" in **Figure 7-1**) on G/F of Wang Tai House, the aforesaid crew members[64] of ST/LRU encountered a large crowd evacuating from the building (as shown in **Photo 7-1 (a)**). Fn HO stopped to assist an elderly female on a wheelchair at Wang Tai House, while Fn YEUNG and Fn SIU did not notice that Fn HO was providing assistance to an evacuee and they continued proceeding towards Wang Cheong House (as shown in **Photo 7-1 (b)**).

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61 Source of Reference: https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202601/22/P2026012100605.htm

62 Source of Reference: https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202601/15/P2026011500612.htm

63 The late Mr. HO Wai-ho was posthumously awarded the honorary title of Senior Fireman in recognition of his outstanding service and selfless dedication to duty by FSD on 11.12.2025.

64 According to CCTV footage, Fn HO's team was equipped with BA, a Rescuee Breathing Aid (RBA), a hammer and a crowbar when passing through the bicycle parking area on G/F of Wang Tai House.


*Photo 7-1 (a): CCTV Screenshot of Fn HO & Two Crew Members Entering the Bicycle Parking Area of Wang Tai House at 1512 hours*[65]


*Photo 7-1 (b): CCTV Screenshot of Fn HO Assisting an Elderly Female in a Wheelchair during her Evacuation*

7.2.2.4 Afterwards, Fn YEUNG and Fn SIU arrived at the open ground outside Wang Cheong House and noted numerous firefighters were scattered around the entrance of Wang Cheong House which was blocked by burning objects. In order to maintain safe entrance and egress at Wang Cheong House for the search and rescue operation to Flat 2701, Fn YEUNG and Fn SIU had to first engage themselves in the firefighting operation at ground level near the front entrance of Wang Cheong House before proceeding further. The location is indicated "2" in **Figure 7-1**.

65 Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1513 hours, it was approximately 61 seconds ahead the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1512 hours.

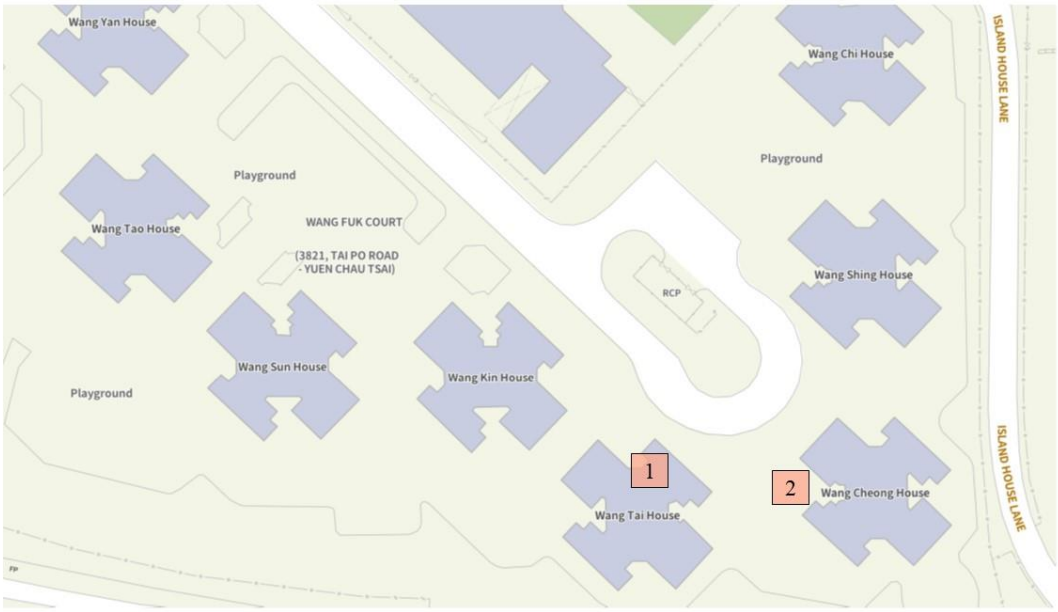


*Figure 7-1: Location Map Showing Fn HO and his Team Members of ST/LRU*

7.2.2.5 Meanwhile, CCTV footage showed that Fn HO entered the lift lobby of Wang Tai House at about 1517 hours[66] (as shown in **Photo 7-2**) and took the lift L14 to 25/F with BA donned (as shown in **Photos 7-3 (a) & (b)**).


*Photo 7-2: CCTV Screenshot Showing Fn HO Entering the Lift Lobby of Wang Tai House*

66 Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1515 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1517 hours.


*Photo 7-3 (a): CCTV Screenshot Showing Fn HO Entering Lift L14 on G/F of Wang Tai House*


*Photo 7-3 (b): CCTV Screenshot Showing Fn HO Exiting Lift L14 on 25/F of Wang Tai House*

7.2.2.6 At 1522 hours, Fn HO dispatched a Mayday message through channel 85 by means of his radio telephone (R/T). According to SStnO HUI, he heard a Mayday message through R/T. The message stated: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, ……...，而家被困係 30 樓。". SStnO HUI was only able to recognize the words "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" and "而家被困係 30 樓". SStnO HUI responded via R/T: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, 你喺咩位置。" However, SStnO HUI could not hear any response. At that time, SStnO HUI did not know the number and identity of the distressed member(s) nor the exact building he/they was/were in.

7.2.2.7 PStnO LIAO and Fn YEUNG both heard the message. The message they received was: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, 我係沙田細搶救隊員 18469 何偉豪，而家被困喺 30 樓。" In the message, Fn HO identified himself as being trapped on 30/F. However, he did not specify the building he was in.

7.2.2.8 SStnO HUI initiated rescue operations, which will be explained in details in section 7.2.4.

7.2.2.9 To understand the adverse conditions Fn HO encountered when he dispatched the Mayday message, the fire development at Wang Tai House, both externally and internally, will be evaluated in details in the ensuing paragraph.

### 7.2.3 Fire Development in Wang Tai House

*Overview of the External Fire Spread*

7.2.3.1 Details of the fire development of Wang Tai House can be referenced in section 5.2.3. Briefly, the fire spread to Wang Tai House via flying embers, though not on a large scale, was observed around 1500 hours. The situation deteriorated quickly, and at about 1516 hours, video footage captured vertical fire spread along the re-entrant on the east side of Wang Tai House (as stated in paragraph 5.2.3.5 and shown in **Photo 7-4**).


*Photo 7-4: Rapid Vertical Fire Spread along the East Re-entrant of Wang Tai House at 1516 hours*

*Rapid Deterioration of Internal Conditions in Wang Tai House*

7.2.3.2 CCTV footage and online video sources were thoroughly reviewed to analyze the internal conditions of Wang Tai House during the fire, which provided insights into the sequence of events and the rapid deterioration of conditions inside the building.

7.2.3.3 CCTV footage showed [redacted] entering lift L14 of Wang Tai House on the 31/F at about 1520 hours[67] (as shown in **Photo 7-5**). Another video from an online source showed [redacted] encountered heavy and dense smoke entering through the upper openable part of the window in the lift lobby (as shown in **Photos 7-6 (a) & (b)**).

7.2.3.4 CCTV footage showed [redacted] inside lift L15 of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours[68]. When the lift doors opened on 23/F, heavy and dense black smoke entered the lift (as shown in **Photos 7-7 (a) to (c)**).

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67 Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1518 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1520 hours.

68 Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1519 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1521 hours.

7.2.3.5 Another CCTV footage showed [redacted] inside lift L13 of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours[69]. When the lift doors opened on 24/F, heavy and dense black smoke poured intensely into the lift (as shown in **Photos 7-8 (a) to (c)**) This coincided with Fn HO's dispatch of the Mayday message, highlighting the severely deteriorating conditions at Wang Tai House.

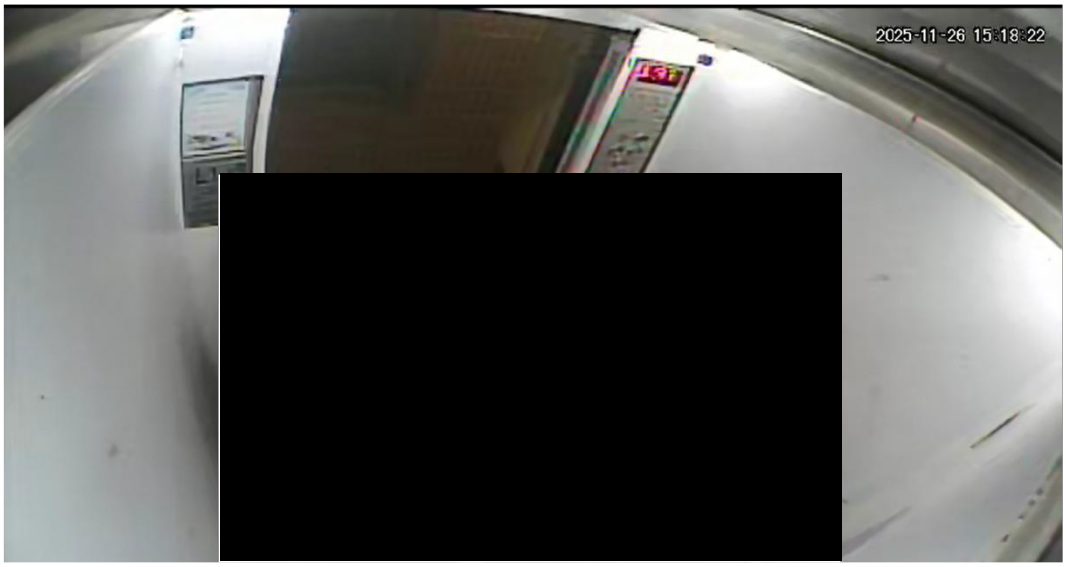


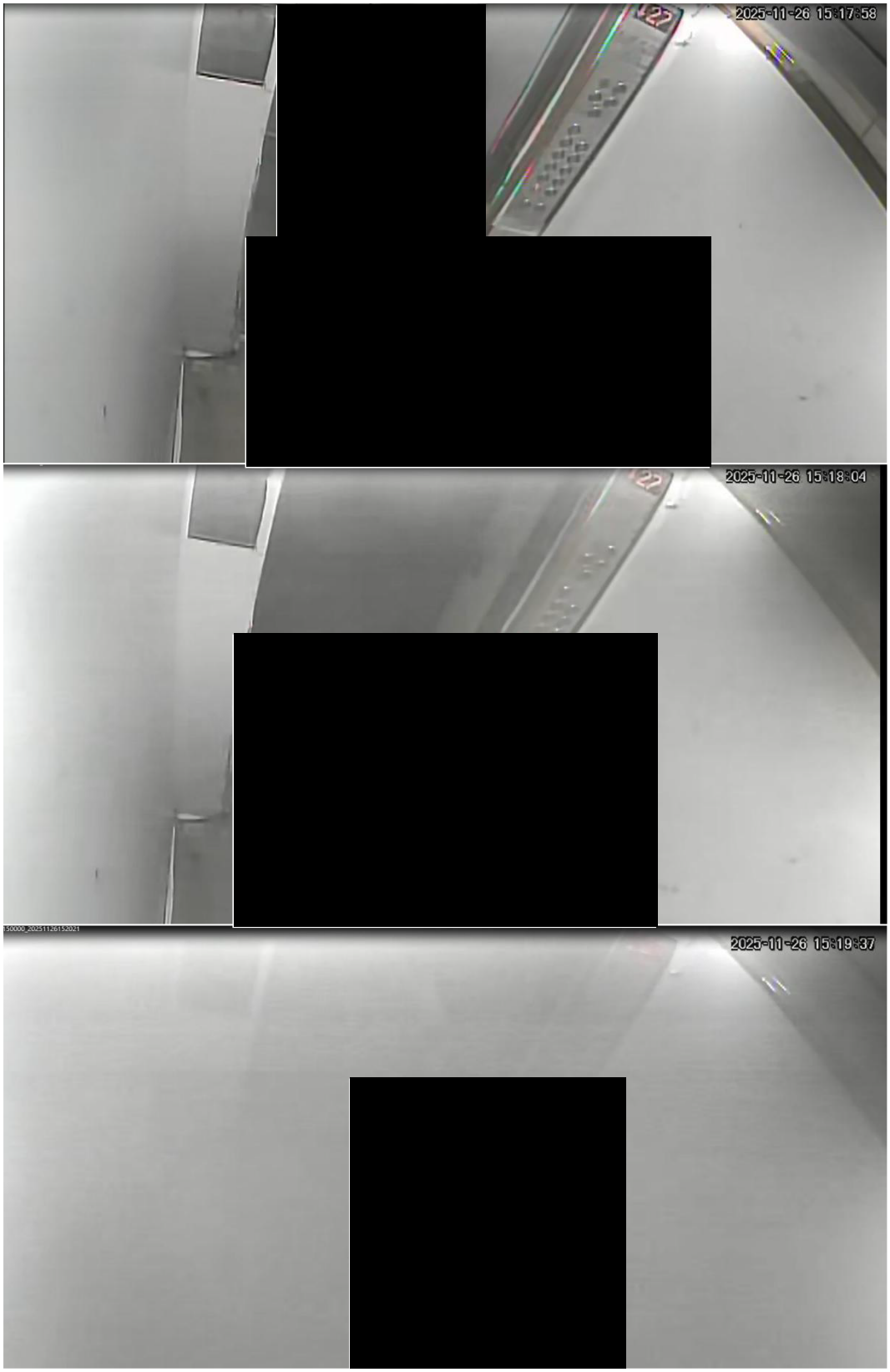

*Photo 7-5: CCTV Screenshot Showing [redacted] Entering Lift L14 on 31/F of Wang Tai House*



*Photos 7-6 (a) & (b): Video from Online Source Showing Internal Condition of Lift Lobby on 31/F of Wang Tai House*

69 Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1519 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1521 hours.


*Photos 7-7 (a) to (c): CCTV Screenshots*
*Showing Internal Condition of Lift L15 on 23/F*




*Photos 7-8 (a) to (c): CCTV Screenshots*
*Showing Internal Condition of Lift L13 on 24/F*

7.2.3.6 A surviving witness, Ms. HON [redacted][redacted][70], a friend of the resident of Flat 30[redacted], Wang Tai House, was interviewed after the fire. Ms. HON stated that she was escaping with four people, but only Ms. HON and one of her friends successfully evacuated to the roof floor (R/F), while the other two went missing during the evacuation.

7.2.3.7 Ms. HON observed that one of the staircases of Wang Tai House was filled with smoke on the 30/F. Upon entering the staircase, she noticed smoke rising from the lower levels, which prompted her to escape to the roof via another staircase. Once there, she found a large portion of the roof engulfed in flames and sought temporary shelter on the unaffected scaffolding at a lower level.

7.2.3.8 Based on the above, it is believed that the internal situation of Wang Tai House deteriorated rapidly shortly after Fn HO entered. CCTV footages and witness accounts indicated that conditions on the 30/F were already very severe at the time when Fn HO dispatched the Mayday message.

### 7.2.4 The Rescue Operation

7.2.4.1 At 1522 hours, upon receiving Fn HO's Mayday message, SStnO HUI immediately responded via R/T: "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, 你喺咩位置。" The call-back message made by SStnO HUI was heard by other personnel at scene, however there was no response from Fn HO. Under such circumstance, SStnO HUI decided to keep all personnel at scene in the same talk group at that moment and repeatedly attempted to establish contact, but to no avail.

7.2.4.2 At that time, SStnO HUI did not know the number and identity of the distressed member(s) nor his/their exact location. However, the fire at Wang Cheong House was extremely severe with heavy smoke. Since the fire originated at Wang Cheong House, SStnO HUI assessed that the distressed member(s) was/were most likely trapped on 30/F of Wang Cheong House. SStnO HUI formed 5 Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) to conduct a search for Fn HO on the 30/F, Wang Cheong House. However, the entrance to Wang Cheong House was obstructed by burning bamboos and miscellaneous articles.

7.2.4.3 SStnO HUI instructed TP/MP and TP/HP to extinguish the fire outside Wang Cheong House and to clear access to the interior. This action was intended to enable the ERTs and other FS members to enter Wang Cheong House and carry out the rescue operation for Fn HO.

[70] Witness Statement of HON [redacted] at ***Appendix A-12 refers***.

7.2.4.4 At about 1534 hours, DDC(NTE) LAM Ho-chun upgraded the fire incident to No.4 Alarm and tasked ADO CHEUNG Lok-hang to continue firefighting operations at Wang Kin House and Wang Sun House; ADO CHOW Tsz-ho to assist DO LAM in handling Mayday rescue operation; and SStnO HUI to tackle fire at Wang Shing House, Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, and to gain clearer access for the ERTs into Wang Cheong House.

7.2.4.5 Since Wang Cheong House was well alight with a lot of burning bamboos and miscellaneous articles obstructing the building entrance at that instance, the ERTs could not enter the building.

7.2.4.6 At approximately 1555 hours, Fn HO was found by PStnO WONG Man-hin and SFn [redacted] CHEUK Kam-wing of TP/MP. At the material time, Fn HO was found unconscious and lying on top of the burning scaffolding outside Wang Tai House (as shown in **Photo 7-9**).

7.2.4.7 Nearby crew members immediately removed Fn HO to place of safety, rendered ambulance aid and handed over to Amb A195 at 1605 hours at scene.

*Photo 7-9: Photo Showing the Location where Fn HO was Discovered*

### 7.2.5 Medical Cause of Death

*Heat Related Injuries*

7.2.5.1 The autopsy[71] revealed that Fn HO had sustained extensive skin burns on various body parts, and inflammation of air passage, indicating thermal injuries and inhalation of smoke and hot gas produced during a fire. The toxicological analysis detected 26% saturation of carboxyhaemoglobin in Fn HO's blood. In addition, soot deposits were found in Fn HO's airways and lungs. These findings indicated that Fn HO had been exposed to the fire and smoke without wearing his BA for a period of time before his death.

*Bruises and Lacerations*

7.2.5.2 The autopsy also revealed that Fn HO had sustained head injuries and fractures localised to the left side of his body (left sided ribs, left pelvis, left shoulder, left arm bone and left forearm bones). These findings suggest that Fn HO might have fallen from height, which resulted in impact on the left side of his body against a wide hard unyielding surface.

7.2.5.3 Given the location and severity of these injuries, it was unlikely for these injuries to be rapidly fatal by themselves. However, the associated injuries to brain and cervical spinal cord might have caused reduced conscious level and limb weakness or paralysis, leading to the physical incapacitation that rendered Fn HO incapable of removing himself from dangerous environment such as the fire.

### 7.2.6 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & Other Equipment

7.2.6.1 When Fn HO was rescued outside Wang Tai House, he was observed wearing the following uniform and PPE:

i) Station T-shirt (Short Sleeves) and No.3 Trousers;
ii) PBI Matrix Tunic and Trousers;
iii) Anti-flash Hood;
iv) Fire Retardant Glove[72] on his right hand, while the left-hand glove was missing; and
v) R/T.

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71 The Autopsy Report of Fn HO at ***Appendix A–57*** refers.

72 In accordance with EN 659:2003, fire retardant glove shall withstand contact heat at 250°C for 10 seconds and radiant heat flux of 40 kW/m² for 20 seconds.

7.2.6.2 The helmet, MSA BA Set, and full-face mask belonged to Fn HO were found in the lift lobby on the 31/F by the crew of FL/HP, considering the set could be used as alternative Rescuee Breathing Aid (RBA), they took the BA set and the full face mask to the roof floor. However, the BA cylinder was found empty and then they subsequently left the BA set and the face mask on the ground of the roof floor.

7.2.6.3 Additionally, Fn HO's left hand glove and a hammer were found on the window sill of the lift lobby on the 31/F, near the broken window (as shown in **Photo 7-10**). The boots belonged to Fn HO were recovered separately at G/F outside Wang Tai House (as shown in **Figure 7-2**) by Acting ADO TSE Kwong-for and PFn [redacted] TANG Cheuk-yin respectively.

*Photo 7-10: Photo Showing the Window Sill on the 31/F*

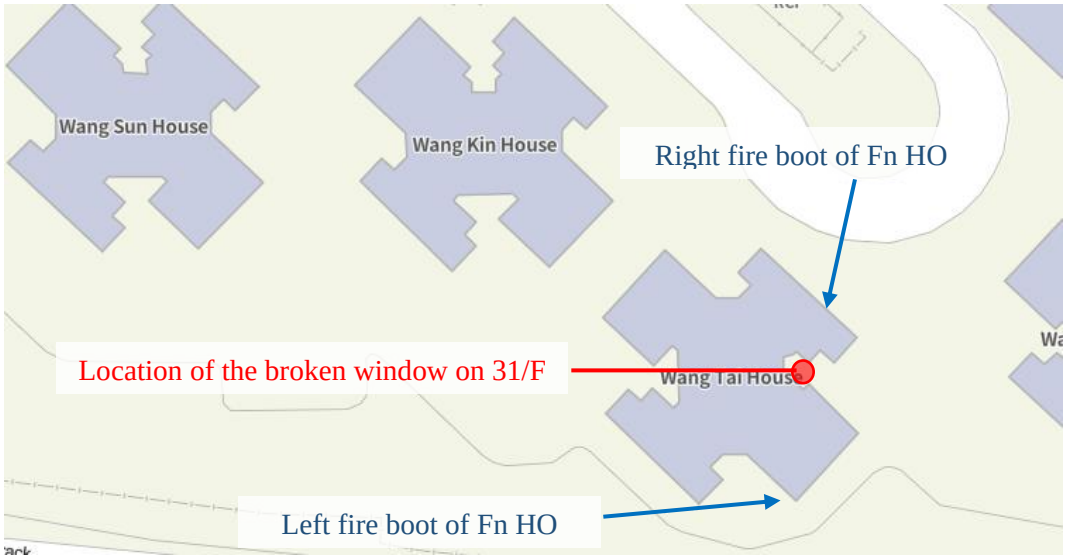


*Figure 7-2: Map Indicating the Locations of the Fire Boots of Fn HO*

7.2.6.4 The post-fire visual inspection revealed that Fn HO might have been in prolonged contact with hot or burning objects, resulting in severe fire damage to his Station T-shirt, No. 3 trousers, PBI Matrix tunic and trousers anti-flash hood and his helmet (as shown in **Photos 7-11** to **7-16**).

*Photo 7-11 (a):*
*Station T-shirt (Front)*

*Photo 7-11 (b):*
*Station T-shirt (back)*

*Photo 7-12 (a):*
*No. 3 Trousers (front)*

*Photo 7-12 (b):*
*No. 3 Trousers (back)*

*Photo 7-13 (a):*
*PBI Matrix Tunic (front)*[73]

*Photo 7-13 (b):*
*PBI Matrix Tunic (back)*

[73] In accordance with EN 469:2020, PBI Matrix tunic and trousers shall withstand 1,093°C for up to 8 seconds.

*Photo 7-14 (a):*
*PBI Matrix Trousers (front)*

*Photo 7-14 (b):*
*PBI Matrix Trousers (back)*

*Photo 7-15 (a):*
*Anti-flash Hood (front)* [74]

*Photo 7-15 (b):*
*Anti-flash Hood (back)*

*Photo 7-16 (a): The Helmet* [75]

*Photo 7-16 (b): Crack on Visor*

[74] In accordance with EN 13911:2017, anti-flash hood shall be non-flammable and capable of withstanding 260°C for 5 minutes without melting or dripping.

[75] In accordance with EN 443:2008, helmets shall be resistant to flame combustion at 900 – 1,000°C for up to 10 seconds; resistant to radiant heat for up to 480 seconds, impact resistance against 5 kg weight and penetration resistance against 1 kg sharp object impact.

7.2.6.5 No unusual damage was observed on Fn HO's anti-flash hood and helmet, apart from a crack in the visor, which might have been caused by contact with a sharp or hard object either prior to or during the fire.

7.2.6.6 The post-fire visual inspection revealed that Fn HO's rubber boots might have also been in prolonged contact with hot or burning objects, resulting in severe fire damage. As the boots are designed to provide protection against fire in accordance with EN 15090:2012[76], it is believed that the intense heat or flames exceeded the boots' protective capacity over an extended period (as shown in **Photos 7-17 (a) & (b)**).

*Photo 7-17 (a):*
*The Rubber Boot (right-foot)*

*Photo 7-17 (b):*
*The sole of the Boot (left-foot)*

7.2.7 **BA Equipment and Operation**

*BA Equipment Examination*

7.2.7.1 The concerned BA set passed the BA half-yearly test on 9.10.2025, which was about 1 month prior to the incident. Additionally, a daily test was conducted by Fn HO on 26.11.2025 with satisfactory results. It is therefore reasonably believed that the BA set, including the face mask, was in efficient working order.

7.2.7.2 The firefighter shown in **Photos 7-3 (a)** & **(b)** was Fn HO. Fn HO entered Wang Tai House and took the lift to 25/F with BA donned and no abnormalities were noted during the process.

[76] In accordance with EN 15090:2012, firefighting boots shall withstand 250°C for up to 10 minutes.

*BA Procedures*

7.2.7.3 Regarding BA-wearing experience, Fn HO was qualified as an MSA BA wearer on 13.2.2017 and subsequently wore BA in numerous incidents throughout his service. Records also indicate that Fn HO attended his last monthly practice on 3.10.2025, demonstrating that he was a competent and experienced BA wearer.

7.2.7.4 Regarding the incident, Fn HO, along with two other ST/LRU members forming a team of three, was instructed to respond to an assistance call at Flat 2701, Wang Cheong House. No negligence or non-observance of procedures by any of the team members involved.

7.2.8 **Observation and Analysis**

*On the Deployment of Fn HO*

7.2.8.1 Fn HO, along with two other ST/LRU members forming a team of three, was instructed to respond to an assistance call at Flat 2701, Wang Cheong House. However, Fn HO was separated from the rest of the team because he was providing assistance to evacuees at the bicycle parking area on the G/F of Wang Tai House.

7.2.8.2 At around 1517 hours[77], Fn HO was captured on CCTV accessing the 25/F of Wang Tai House via the lift with his BA donned (as shown in **Photos 7-3 (a) & (b)**). It is inferred that Fn HO had mistakenly believed that he was at Wang Cheong House when he was, in fact, at Wang Tai House.

7.2.8.3 Fn HO likely believed that the rest of the team had already reached the 27/F. In an attempt to rejoin his crew, Fn HO took the lift to the 25/F, two floors below the reported location. Since stopping the lift car at least two floors below the affected/reported floor is a standard safety precautionary measure when using Fireman's Lift[78], it is believed that Fn HO was executing his assigned order and approaching Flat 2701 of Wang Cheong House at that moment.

7.2.8.4 Based on the post-fire investigation, it is believed that conditions deteriorated rapidly shortly after Fn HO arrived on the 25/F. It also revealed that multiple fatalities were located on 31/F and R/F, further highlighting the severe conditions in those areas. The witness statement of HON [redacted][79] also confirmed that both staircases were heavily smoke-logged.

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77 Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1515 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1517 hours.

78 Paragraph 5.1.1 of FS Manual (Operation), Part I, Section IV(B), Chapter 12 – Operational Procedures on the Use of Fireman's Lift refers.

79 Witness Statement of HON [redacted] at ***Appendix A-12*** refers.

7.2.8.5 Equipped with proper PPE and BA, Fn HO was fully capable of escaping from Wang Tai House upon noting the deteriorating situation; however, it is believed that he stayed in Wang Tai House in attempt to assist the evacuation of the others.

7.2.8.6 Based on the recovery of Fn HO's BA set, full-face mask, helmet and hammer on 31/F, together with the broken window at the lift lobby, it is reasonably believed that Fn HO had placed down his equipment before attempting to climb out of the building to the external scaffolding via the window as shown in **Photo 7-10**, as this might be the only option available for him at the moment, to seek assistance or to identify an alternative escape route. The autopsy report indicated that his injury pattern was consistent with a fall (see paragraph 7.2.5.2), supporting the inference that he exited the building structure through the scaffolding.

7.2.8.7 Plausible reconstruction are (i) that Fn HO was overcome by smoke inhalation, lost consciousness, and subsequently fell from height; and (ii) that he fell while climbing the scaffolding, sustained incapacitating injuries, and later became unconscious. In the latter scenario, he may have remained on or near the scaffolding until it collapsed, resulting in a combined fall with the structure. Both interpretations are consistent with the autopsy findings of blunt force trauma, fractures, and smoke inhalation.

7.2.8.8 In either case, the evidence indicates that Fn HO was engaged in a valiant effort to escape or obtain help under extreme conditions. His incapacitation — whether primarily due to smoke inhalation or traumatic injuries sustained during a fall — ultimately rendered him unable to remove himself from danger, leading to his tragic passing.

*On PPE*

7.2.8.9 The confirmed cause of death of Fn HO was determined to be the adverse effects of fire and the inhalation of fire fumes and smoke. Although the PPE was severely damaged due to prolonged contact with hot or burning objects, it continued to serve its intended purpose.

### 7.2.9 Conclusion

7.2.9.1 According to the Autopsy report Fn HO died from inhalation of fire fumes and extensive burns, with head and neck injuries as other significant conditions contributing to the death.

7.2.9.2 Fn HO demonstrated exceptional bravery and a deep sense of duty while responding to the incident. Despite the challenging and life-threatening conditions, he prioritized the safety of others over his own, exemplifying the highest standards of selflessness and dedication.

## 7.3 Circumstances Leading to Other Fatalities

7.3.1 The Summary[80] of the fatalities was provided in ***Appendix A-22(A)***.

## 7.4 Circumstances Leading to the Injuries

7.4.1 The Summary[81] of the injuries was provided in ***Appendix A-22(B)***.

[80] Details will be provided in final report.
[81] Details will be provided in final report.

# Chapter 8 - Circumstances Leading to Heavy Casualties

## 8.1 Overview of Preliminary Findings

8.1.1 The fire at Wang Fuk Court resulted in an unprecedented number of fatalities and injuries. This chapter examines the circumstances that contributed to the heavy casualties, based on observations and analysis conducted by the IFITF. Apart from the source of ignition as elaborated in Chapter 6, which should not have been present at an active works site, the task force identified several critical factors that led to heavy casualties, including:

- Increased risk of entrapment due to rapid and extensive fire spread;
- Polystyrene window covers on units;
- Failure of fire alarms;
- Compromised tenability in means of escape; and
- Flaming bamboo scaffolding and accumulated burning debris blocking building entrances

8.1.2 The following paragraphs elaborate on how these factors unfolded in sequence and compounded each other.

## 8.2 Increased Risk of Entrapment due to Rapid and Extensive Fire Spread

8.2.1 Video recordings evidenced that flames quickly spread from the lower levels to the rooftop. This extreme rate of vertical fire spread left residents with limited time to react, significantly reducing opportunities for safe evacuation and increasing the likelihood of entrapment.

8.2.2 In other words, from a very early stage, the fire behaviour had already set a critical time pressure on both evacuees and first responders, such that any subsequent delay or failure in warning and evacuation would have far more serious consequences.

8.2.3 The rapid and extensive spread of the fire was driven by a combination of factors, as detailed in section 6.2, including:

- Rapid vertical fire spread through the chimney-like re-entrant filled with combustible materials;
- Secondary ignitions caused by wind-driven embers;
- Unfavourable weather conditions accelerating fire spread;
- Combustible envelope, such as safety nets, toe-boards, nylon strips, contributing to fire propagation; and
- Fire load inside units prolonging fire duration.

These factors interacted and amplified one another, creating conditions ideal for fire development. Taken together, they meant that once the fire started, it was predisposed to spread quickly along the exterior and into the units, leaving residents with very little margin for hesitation or misjudgement.

## 8.3 Polystyrene Window Covers

8.3.1 Polystyrene window covers, installed on unit windows, obstructed residents' visibility of the external. This hindered occupants from realizing the severity of the fire in neighboring buildings, lowering their awareness and in turn delaying their response. At the incipient stage of the fire, when early visual cues could have prompted quicker self-initiated evacuation, these covers therefore prevented some residents from appreciating that their own building was already under serious threat.

8.3.2 In addition, the combustible polystyrene panels contributed to the vertical spread of the fire. Once windows were breached, flames and smoke entered units easily and directly exposing residents to dangerous conditions, not to mention the combustion of such polystyrene materials will generate toxic gases such as Carbon Monoxide. Once ignited, they fueled fire spread and toxic smoke production, increasing the risk of entrapment and injury.

8.3.3 The combustible polystyrene window covers, believed to have been applied to protect windows from debris, the extensive use of such materials covering majority part of the building façade may introduce additional hazards in case of fire.

## 8.4 Failure of Fire Alarms

8.4.1 Information indicates that FAS failed to work in seven of the eight blocks at Wang Fuk Court during the fire. This failure delayed the alerting of residents, reducing the time available for safe evacuation. Against the background of rapid fire spread and masked external visibility, the absence of a functioning FAS meant that many residents did not receive a clear, building-wide warning at the stage when escape routes were still comparatively tenable.

8.4.2 According to Ms. CHUNG [redacted][82], the security guard of Wang Cheong House, she attempted to manually activate the FAS to alert residents to evacuate at about 1448 hours. This attempt was made while the fire was still in its incipient stage, three minutes before it was officially reported to the FSD at 1451 hours. However, her efforts were unsuccessful, further contributing to the delay in evacuation warnings. As a result, many residents only became aware of the fire at a point when smoke and heat had already worsened in common areas, making safe evacuation more difficult.

8.4.3 **Regardless of whether a building is undergoing renovation,** if FSI need to be shut down for maintenance or repair, a systematic approach should be adopted in carrying out the works. The affected FSI should be shut down by sections and be resumed normal as soon as practicable.

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82 Witness statement of CHUNG [redacted] at ***Appendix A-11*** refers.

8.4.4 From time to time, FSIs may occasionally develop defects or require temporary shutdowns for carrying out maintenance/ inspection/ modification/ repair by RFSICs[83]. To ensure that such occasions are managed in a consistent, safe and compliant manner, the FSD had established procedural frameworks.[84]

8.4.5 In the case of Wang Fuk Court, the RFSIC stated that only the FH/HR systems were shut down for repair. However, no notification or communication was provided to the FSD regarding any shutdown of the FAS.

## 8.5 Compromised Tenability in Means of Escape

### *8.5.1* *Lift Lobby Windows*

8.5.1.1 During the fire, the upper openable[85] parts of the windows in the lift lobbies on some floors were left open. This allowed smoke from burning combustible materials on the external scaffolding to enter the lift lobbies and corridors, which in turn hinder evacuation (as shown in **Photos 8-1 (a) & (b)**). Even while residents still had a theoretical opportunity to leave, the corridors and lobbies through which they had to pass were rapidly filling with smoke, reducing visibility, increasing heat and stress and slowing movement. In this situation, the residents were likely too panicked to close the windows, although doing so might have helped relieve the situation.

8.5.1.2 The smoke log situation recorded in section 7.2.3, together with the statement from Ms. SUEN [redacted][86] confirmed that heavy, dense black smoke poured intensely into the common corridors of Wang Cheong House and created severe difficulties for her to escape, forcing her to retreat back to her flat to avoid the smoke and await FS assistance.

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83 Under the existing legislative framework, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the FSIs are kept in efficient working order. The RFSIC, as the competent person engaged by the owner, is responsible for inspecting the FSIs and reporting any identified deficiencies to FSD.

84 In case the work is expected to be carried out overnight or persist for more than 24 hours and if the defect in the FSI may, in the event of fire, put the entire building in jeopardy, in accordance with FSD CL No. 1/2021 - Shutdown of FSIs for Maintenance, Inspection, Modification or Repair, a set of procedures for handling shutdown of FSIs must be observed by RFSIC when any of major FSIs need to be shut down for maintenance, inspection, modification, or repair. Once the shutdown details including the location(s) / part(s) requiring works and the duration of the shutdown have been confirmed, the RFSIC shall submit a FSI Shutdown Notice to the FSD within 24 hours. Upon receiving the notification, personnel from the local fire station will visit the premises within 24 hours to conduct a risk assessment. The objectives are twofold: (i) to assess the risk from an operational perspective; and (ii) to assess the scale and type of additional fire safety measures to be taken by FSI owner(s) during the shutdown period. Based on the risk assessment results, the FSD will issue an Advisory Letter to the FSI owner(s), urging them to **complete repairs as early as possible** and requiring them to **notify the occupants of the FSI failures.**

85 As explained in paragraph 4.3.2, the upper part of the windows at the lift lobbies as well as in the staircases of the eight blocks of Wang Fuk Court were openable, while the lower part of the windows was fixed light. Such design was compliant with the prevailing standard at the time of construction of Wang Fuk Court (i.e. Clause 23 of CoP on MOE 1976)

86 Witness statement of SUEN [redacted] at ***Appendix A-10*** refers.



*Photos 8-1 (a) & (b): Video from Online Source Showing Smoke Entering Lift Lobby through the Upper Openable Part of Window of Wang Tai House*

### *8.5.2 Staircase Windows Replaced with Movable Boards*

8.5.2.1 Some windows (details at paragraph 4.5.5.4) were replaced with movable boards to allow workers' access to the exterior scaffolding. During the fire, these movable boards permitted smoke and heat to infiltrate the staircases. Severe blackening of ceilings above the doors indicated heavy smoke penetration. As a result, staircases intended to serve as protected escape routes were compromised, leaving residents without safe pathways for evacuation. This also restricted firefighter access, delayed firefighting and rescue operations, and reduced the effectiveness of firefighting efforts (as shown in **Photo 8-2**).

*Photo 8-2: Windows Replaced by Movable Boards (Damaged by Fire) at Escape Staircase of 10-11/F of Wang Tai House*

8.5.2.2 When scaffolding was erected at the re-entrant, some windows of the staircases were removed and replaced with movable boards which were combustible, and the window openings are suspected to be misused for access of workers and delivery of materials to the scaffolding. All these allowed the exit routes to communicate with the working area at the external wall, introducing additional hazards and adversely affecting the normal function of the exit staircases.

8.5.2.3 In effect, the aforesaid alterations made for renovation purposes directly undermined the performance of the escape routes at the very moment they were most needed. This failure created significant difficulties for both evacuees and firefighters, as the staircases and corridors no longer provided the level of protection intended in the original design.

8.5.2.4 According to Mr. LI [redacted] (as provided in ***Appendix A-24***), a construction worker in Wang Cheong House, he became aware of the fire at about 1450 hours and successfully evacuated to the Ground level of Wang Cheong House at about 1500 hours.

8.5.2.5 During his escape from the R/F using the staircase, he encountered smoke and heat. By the time he reached the 14/F, he paused at the lift lobby to catch his breath and recover for about 30 seconds. However, upon returning to the staircase, he found it filled with dense smoke, rendering it unusable for escape. With no other alternatives, he returned to the lift lobby and ultimately used the lift to evacuate.

8.5.3 Statements of injured persons (at ***Appendices A-10, A-12, A-31 to A-54***) also confirmed that heavy, dense black smoke poured intensely into the common corridors and staircases, with some accounts indicating that smoke had even penetrated into individual residential units of the buildings in Wang Fuk Court. This situation created severe difficulties for evacuees attempting to escape, forcing some to retreat back into their domestic flats or seek temporary places of safety to avoid the smoke and await FS assistance.

8.5.4 BD, as the authority under the BO, is of the view that, to maintain the functionality of the exit staircases during repair works, the staircases must remain unobstructed and free from any additional hazards. Furthermore, the integrity of the fire separation for protected escape routes must be properly maintained. As such, the installation of combustible wooden movable boards providing access to the scaffolding, which introduces additional hazards to the exit route, indicates that the construction methods and precautionary measures in place may be inappropriate.

## 8.6 Fire-Damaged Combustible Envelope Blocking Exits

8.6.1 Flaming bamboo scaffolding and other construction materials detached from the upper levels during the fire led to a large amount of burning debris being accumulated on the ground level, resulting in flaming obstructions that blocked building entrances. As a result, both escape for evacuees and access for firefighting personnel were obstructed, thus delaying escape, rescue efforts and fire suppression (as shown in **Photo 8-3**). For some occupants, even after they had managed to fight their way down through smoke-affected corridors and staircases, their final exit from the building was still blocked by walls of flame and burning debris. In addition, smoke entering the building from the G/F further hindered escape and hampered the rescue operations of firefighting personnel (as shown in **Photo 8-4**).

8.6.2 In parallel, firefighters faced serious challenges in approaching the entrances safely and quickly, as they had to contend with falling, burning materials and intense heat at the base of the buildings. This further delayed interior firefighting and rescue operations, prolonging the period during which trapped residents remained exposed to deteriorating conditions.

*Photo 8-3: The Burning Debris and Bamboo Scaffolding Blocking Exits*


*Photo 8-4: Flame was Observed at the Entrance of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours*[87]

[87] Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1519 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1521 hours.

# Chapter 9 – Conclusion of the Interim Report

9.1 The fire at Wang Fuk Court on 26.11.2025 was one of the most devastating incidents in recent history, resulting in 168 fatalities, including one FS member, and 79 injuries. The scale and severity of the incident highlighted critical issues related to fire safety, building management, and renovation practices, all of which require urgent attention to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

9.2 The FSD responded swiftly and appropriately despite the rapid fire spread, resulting in the rescue of over 100 individuals, highlighting the dedication and bravery of FS personnel. In response to the challenges posed by the incident, the FSD adapted by implementing dynamic and special arrangements such as early activation of DCP, strengthening of the command structure, and exceptional resource deployment.

9.3 The investigation conducted by the IFITF concluded that the fire originated from the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House. The incident was most likely accidental in nature, initiated by a glowing source (such as a lit cigarette end) igniting combustible materials (such as carton paper boxes).

9.4 Seven out of the eight buildings in Wang Fuk Court sustained significant damage during the fire. Three dominant modes of fire spread observed during the incident were detailed in the ensuing paragraphs:

9.4.1 The **rapid vertical fire spread** at Wang Cheong House began on the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105, the fire quickly intensified and spread through the re-entrant which was filled with combustibles. The substantial fuel load within the re-entrant sustained the fire's progression and enabled rapid escalation of fire across multiple floors. Similar rapid vertical fire spread was also observed in other buildings.

9.4.2 **Fire spread from the exterior into domestic units is believed to have occurred** through broken or open windows, allowing the flames to transition from external sources and ignite abundant interior combustible materials like furniture, curtains, bedding and electronics.

9.4.3 **Secondary ignitions** were significantly influenced by windy and dry weather, which created an ideal environment for fire spread. Falling debris, embers and droplets ignited nearby combustible material including the combustible "envelope" enclosing the buildings. Wind-driven embers travelled long distances and ignited additional fires in nearby structures, which complicated firefighting efforts by creating multiple locations of fire. The potential lack of FR properties in the safety nets may have exacerbated the situation by enabling the fire to spread further instead of self-extinguishing.

9.5 To better understand these fire-spreading mechanisms, full-scale fire tests and CFD simulation were being conducted to validate the dynamics of the fire and the contributing factors that intensified its spread. Detailed analysis will be provided in the Final Report.

9.6 The incident resulted in 168 fatalities, including one FS member, and 79 injuries. Several key factors likely contributed to the heavy casualties are detailed in the ensuing paragraphs:

9.6.1 **Increased Risk of Entrapment Due to Rapid and Extensive Fire Spread:** The extremely fast rate of fire spread placed immense time pressure on evacuation efforts. Residents who hesitated even briefly, were unaware of the fire, or were unable to quickly navigate escape routes faced a much higher risk of entrapment.

9.6.2 **Polystyrene Window Covers:** These covers, especially when used extensively, obscured visibility, delayed residents' awareness of the fire, and contributed to fire spread and the generation of toxic smoke when ignited.

9.6.3 **Failure of Fire Alarms:** The failure of the FAS delayed the alerting of residents, significantly reducing the time available for safe evacuation.

9.6.4 **Compromised Tenability Means of Escape:** Renovation-related alterations, such as replacing some staircase windows with movable boards, might have allowed more smoke and heat to infiltrate escape routes. This rendered staircases untenable, leaving many residents unable to evacuate safely and obstructing firefighter access.

9.6.5 **Fire-Damaged Combustible Envelope Blocking Exits:** Flaming bamboo scaffolding and other construction materials detached from upper levels created obstructions at ground level, blocking building entrances and complicating both evacuation and rescue efforts.

9.7 The IFITF will continue to probe into the details of the incident, with methods including the conducting of fire analysis and simulations, collecting evidence from stakeholders, eye-witnesses and firefighters, and further examination of the circumstances leading to heavy casualties. Details of the findings will be provided in the final report.

***- End -***