

**INDEPENDENT COMMITTEE  
IN RELATION TO THE FIRE AT  
WANG FUK COURT IN TAI PO**

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**RULES OF PROCEDURE  
FOR EVIDENTIAL HEARING**

(made at the direction conference on 5 February 2026)

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1. The Independent Committee (“**Committee**”) will hear evidence regarding the matters set out in its Terms of Reference published by the Government on 12 December 2025 (“**Evidential Hearing**”).

**I. General**

Date and time

2. The Evidential Hearing shall be held at 3/F, City Gallery, 3 Edinburgh Place, Central, Hong Kong and shall commence on 19 March 2026 at 10:00 am.
3. The Evidential Hearing shall continue subject to any adjournments that the Committee may consider necessary from time to time.
4. Unless otherwise directed, the Evidential Hearing will be conducted from 10 am to 1 pm and from 2:15 pm to 4:30 pm every weekday. The Committee may, if necessary, direct that the Evidential Hearing continue on Saturday mornings during the periods mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

Participation and legal representation

5. Any party who wishes to (1) participate at the Evidential Hearing; (2) call any witnesses; and/or (3) adduce any witness statements and/or materials for the purposes of the Evidential Hearing, shall (if permission to participate has not yet been granted by the Committee) apply in writing to the Committee (“**Participation Application**”) stating the grounds of their application on or before 12 February 2026.

6. The Committee may allow or disallow any Participation Application and impose such limitations on the scope of a party's participation in the Evidential Hearing and/or prescribe the manner by which such party's evidence is to be received by the Committee as it considers appropriate.
7. Unless otherwise directed by the Committee, any party who has been permitted by the Committee to participate, call witnesses or adduce witness statements and/or materials at the Evidential Hearing ("**Involved Party**") shall:
  - (1) provide the witness statement(s) of the witness(es) to be called and/or such material(s) which they wish to adduce before the Committee on or before 23 February 2026; and
  - (2) provide the Secretariat with the name, title, telephone number and email address of a representative of the Involved Party to the Secretariat on or before 23 February 2026, which will be used by the Secretariat for disseminating messages in relation to logistical arrangements for the Evidential Hearing.
8. All applications, submissions, witness statements or materials to be provided to the Committee shall be addressed to the Secretariat and delivered by email at [secretariat@ic-wangfukcourtfire.gov.hk](mailto:secretariat@ic-wangfukcourtfire.gov.hk), by fax at 2333 1302 or by post to 10/F, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Attendance by members of the public

9. Unless otherwise directed by the Committee, the Evidential Hearing will be open to the public.
10. Without the authorisation of the Committee, no photographs or audio/video recordings may be taken or made of the Evidential Hearing or within the precincts of the hearing venue at City Gallery, 3 Edinburgh Place, Central, Hong Kong, and the hearing transmission gallery (or galleries) to be set up by the Committee for the duration of the Evidential Hearing.

## II. Procedure at the Oral Hearing

### Hearing bundles and use of documents and materials

11. Hearing bundles will be prepared for use at the Evidential Hearing by the Secretariat. The hearing bundles will be made available to the Involved Parties in electronic form only and will only include those documents which the Committee considers to be relevant and appropriate for inclusion. The Committee may also apply such redactions as it considers appropriate to the documents in the hearing bundles.
12. Any party who wishes to include any further documents in the hearing bundles should apply to the Secretariat in writing (with a copy to be sent to the solicitors for the Committee at the same time).
13. All materials supplied by the Committee to any of the Involved Parties shall be used only for the purposes of the Evidential Hearing. Public dissemination of any of such materials shall not be allowed without the authorisation in writing of the Committee. The release and supply of any materials by the Committee (and/or its legal representatives) to any persons and entities (whether legally represented or otherwise) ("**Persons and Entities**") shall be deemed to be subject to an undertaking by those Persons and Entities, and their respective solicitors and Counsel (in the case of those Persons and Entities who are legally represented) that they shall not, under any circumstances, disseminate and/or disclose such materials and the information, contents and sources thereof to any other Involved Parties, persons and/or entities without the authorization in writing of the Committee.

### Opening addresses

14. Counsel for the Committee may make written and oral opening address. Any Involved Party who wishes to make an oral opening address should make an application to the Committee (enclosing a written opening address which should not be longer than 20 pages, in font size 14 and with one inch margins) on or before 9 March 2026.
15. Subject to the Committee's discretion to determine the sequence and length of such oral addresses, any oral opening address by Involved Parties shall not exceed 30 minutes and shall be made immediately after the address of Counsel for the Committee.

16. Subject to the discretion of the Committee and any redactions as the Committee considers appropriate, any written opening submissions submitted to the Committee shall be uploaded to the Committee's website.

#### Receipt of evidence

17. The Committee shall not be bound by rules of evidence and may receive and consider any material whether by way of oral evidence, written statements, documents or otherwise, notwithstanding that such material would not be admissible as evidence in civil or criminal proceedings.
18. Witnesses may give their evidence in any language or dialect of their own choice, provided that the Secretariat must be informed by 9 March 2026 if a witness wishes to give evidence at the Evidential Hearing in any language or dialect other than Cantonese, Putonghua, or English. Simultaneous interpretation services will be arranged by the Committee.
19. Any witness shall, prior to giving their evidence, declare that the evidence they shall give is true to the best of their knowledge, information and belief.
20. The procedure by which the Committee will receive oral evidence is as follows:
  - (1) The Committee shall determine the sequence in which oral evidence shall be given at the Evidential Hearing, and publish timetables in the course of the evidential hearings.
  - (2) Counsel for the Committee will pose questions to witnesses called by the Committee. Any Involved Party who wishes to pose questions to the witness and who has been permitted to do so by the Committee may then pose questions in the sequence determined by the Committee. An application by any Involved Party to pose questions to the witness of the Committee shall be made at the conclusion of the questions by Counsel for the Committee, with a brief explanation of the intended scope of questions. Counsel for the Committee may re-examine such witness.

- (3) Where a witness is tendered by an Involved Party, the legal representative of the Involved Party may not, unless otherwise permitted by the Committee, lead the evidence-in-chief of such a witness. At the Evidential Hearing, Counsel for the Committee will pose questions to witnesses tendered by any Involved Party. Any other Involved Party who wishes to pose questions to such a witness and who has been permitted to do so by the Committee may then pose questions in the sequence determined by the Committee. An application by any other Involved Party to pose questions to the witness of an Involved Party shall be made at the conclusion of the questions by Counsel for the Committee, with a brief explanation of the intended scope of questions. Finally, the legal representative for the Involved Party tendering the witness may re-examine such witness.
  - (4) Unless otherwise directed by the Committee, insofar as any witness wishes to adopt his or her witness statement as his or her evidence (with or without modification or elaboration), the contents of his or her witness statement will not be read out.
  - (5) The Committee may pose questions of any witness giving oral evidence at any time during the giving of that oral evidence.
21. The Committee shall determine whether or not evidence given by the representative of any Involved Party or questions posed of him/her is relevant and may also at any time prescribe limits of time for the giving of oral evidence of any witness. In particular, the Committee will rule on applications by Involved Parties to pose questions to witnesses having regard to the relevance of the evidence of the witness to the interests of the relevant Involved Party, the need to ensure the fair and efficient conduct of the Evidential Hearing, and such other factors that the Committee deems relevant.
22. The Committee may recall any person who has given oral evidence to answer further questions.

### Closing addresses

23. Counsel for the Committee and the Involved Parties may make written and, if so directed by the Committee, oral closing addresses. The Committee may determine the format, sequence and length (both written and oral) of such addresses.
24. Subject to the discretion of the Committee and any redactions as the Committee considers appropriate, any written closing submissions submitted to the Committee shall be uploaded to the Committee's website.

### Transcripts

25. The Secretariat will arrange live transcription services for the Evidential Hearing. Any applications by an Involved Party for subscriptions to the live transcription service should be made in writing to the Secretariat of the Committee on or before 27 February 2026, stating how many subscriptions are required and undertaking to pay the costs thereof. To view the real-time transcript during the Evidential Hearing, subscribers will need to use their own laptops or notebook computers and make arrangement with the service provider directly.
26. Electronic copies of the transcript of each day of the Evidential Hearing shall be provided to Counsel for the Committee and legal representatives of the relevant Involved Parties who were permitted to participate in the Evidential Hearing once it is available to the Committee. Subject to the discretion of the Committee, the transcripts shall be uploaded to the Committee's website.
27. Seating arrangements during the course of the Evidential Hearing shall be determined by the Secretariat on a day-to-day basis. Seating for Counsel and Solicitors for the Committee shall be fixed throughout the Evidential Hearing whereas legal representatives of the Involved Parties will be allocated seats depending upon the identity of the witness giving evidence, those parties who have been granted leave to question the witness and any other factors that the Secretariat deems relevant.
28. These Rules of Procedure may be amended or supplemented by the Committee at any time as it considers appropriate.