

**Independent Committee in relation to the
Fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po**

Witness Statement of TANG Wing-wah

I, TANG Wing-wah, of New Territories North Command, Fire Services Department, 28 Yuen Wo Road, Shatin, N.T., do say as follows:-

1. I am the Assistant Director (New Territories North) (“**AD(NTN)**”) of the Fire Services Department (“**FSD**”) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. I have joined the FSD for about 29 years since 1996 and was promoted to the present rank on 31 March 2025. My main responsibility is to lead the New Territories North Command.
2. I make this Witness Statement pursuant to the request of the Independent Committee (“**Committee**”) in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po as set out in a letter from Messrs. Lo & Lo, Solicitors for the Committee, to the FSD dated 23 December 2025 (“**23 December Letter**”) in which specific questions were raised in paragraphs 2 to 3, 5 to 9, and 12 to 20 (“**Questions**”). Save where otherwise appears, the facts deposed hereto are within my personal knowledge or are derived from office files and records and sources to which I have access and are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. Save as otherwise specified, this Witness Statement adopts the same abbreviations and nomenclature as in the 23 December Letter.
3. This Witness Statement addresses Questions 2.2, 2.3, 3, 19.3 and 19.8.2 of the 23 December Letter. Other Questions which are within FSD’s purview will be addressed in the witness statements of other relevant officers of FSD to the Committee. I understand

that FSD will produce to the Committee a List of Documents (“LoD”), a draft of which I have read, indexing all relevant documents in FSD’s possession. In this Witness Statement, I shall refer to these documents by their designation in the LoD (for example, [FSD/A(I)/1] means Item 1 in Part A(I) of the LoD) without annexing them hereto for the avoidance of duplication.

4. This Witness Statement is divided into the following parts:-
- (1) **Part A** provides a timeline and account of the firefighting and rescue operations (“**Operations**”) and of the evacuation of residents (“**Evacuation**”) in response to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in answer to **Question 2.2 and 2.3**;
 - (2) **Part B** describes the difficulties and challenges encountered during the Operation and Evacuation, and explains how such difficulties and challenges have come about in answer to **Question 3**;
 - (3) **Part C** sets out the views on the feasibility of broadcasting evacuation warnings through the Emergency Alert System (“**EAS**”) in answer to **Question 19.3**; and
 - (4) **Part D** responds to the concerns or complaints regarding the use of scaffolding nets at Sui Wo Court in answer to **Question 19.8.2**.

Part A: Timeline and account of the incident, firefighting and rescue operations and evacuation of residents in response to the fire at Wang Fuk Court

Question 2.2 of Request 1

Background about FSD

5. FSD is led by the Director of Fire Services (“**D of FS**”) with the [FSD/G(III)/12] support from the Deputy Director (Operations) (“**DD(Ops)**”) and

the Deputy Director (Public Safety and Corporate Strategy) (“DD(P&C)”). DD(Ops) oversees the four Operational Commands, the Operational Support and Professional Development Command and the Ambulance Command; whereas DD(P&C) oversees the Corporate Strategy Command, the Fire Safety Command, the Licensing and Certification Command and the Administration Branch. The senior management comprises 22 directorate officers, including 21 uniformed officers and one civilian officer.

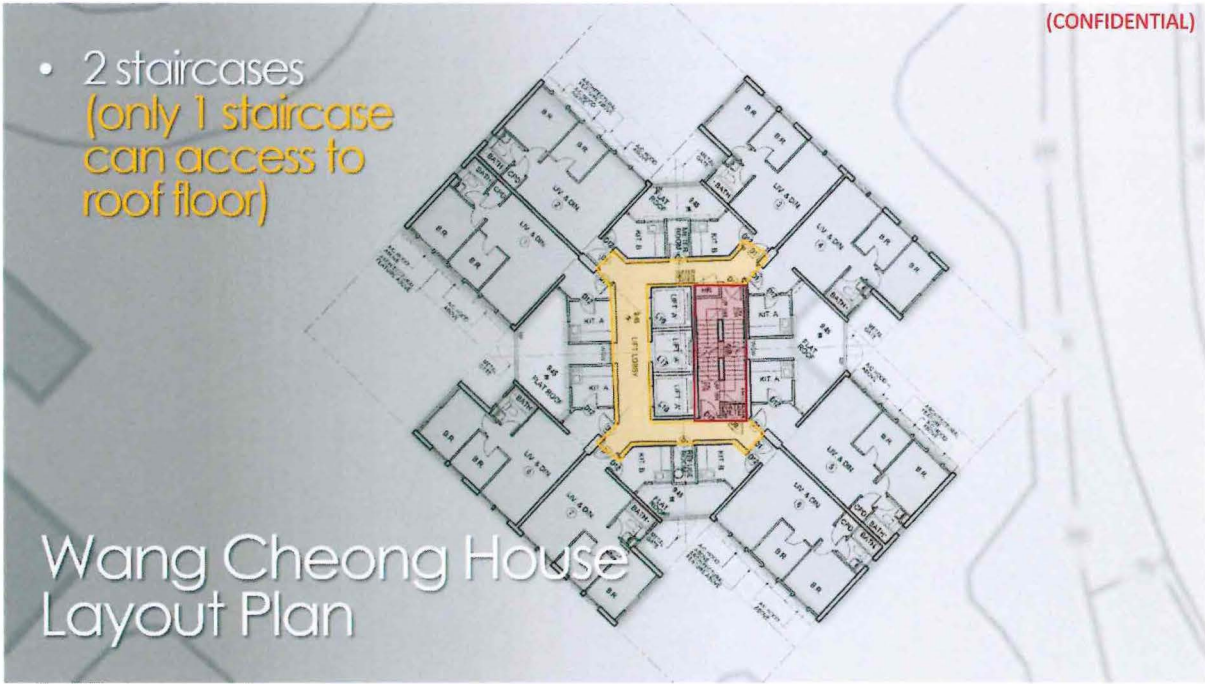
6. At the outset, the extant Incident Command System, and Search and Rescue (“SAR”) Strategy for Building fires were adopted as the framework to tackle the fire at different stages. [FSD/G(I)/15] [FSD/G(I)/12]

Background about Wang Fuk Court

7. Completed in 1983, the Wang Fuk Court is a Home Ownership Scheme estate consisting of eight residential blocks, namely (i) Wang Yan House (Block A), (ii) Wang Tao House (Block B), (iii) Wang Sun House (Block C), (iv) Wang Kin House (Block D), (v) Wang Tai House (Block E), (vi) Wang Cheong House (Block F), (vii) Wang Shing House (Block G), and (viii) Wang Chi House (Block H). Each block consists of 31 floors. Each floor consists of 8 units numbered 1 to 8, connected by a “U-shaped” corridor with the lift lobby at the centre. Opposite to the lift lobby, there are two sets of criss-crossing staircases commonly called “scissor stairs” to provide a continuous means of escape. Both staircases can be accessed from the 31st floor down to the ground floor, but only one of them leads to the rooftop. A general layout of Wang Fuk Court and a sample floorplan taken of Wang Cheong House are shown below for reference.



General Layout of Wang Fuk Court



Layout Plan of Wang Cheong House (Typical Layout)

No.1 Alarm Fire (from 1451 hours – 1501 hours)

8. At 1451 hours on 26.11.2025, the first fire call was received by the Fire Services Communications Centre (“FSCC”). The caller reported that a fire with explosion occurred at scaffolding installed along the external wall of Wang Cheong House. According to the Pre-determined Attendance (“PDA”) formulated in response to No.1 Alarm Fire for the subject estate, one Hydraulic Platform (“HP”), one Major Pump (“MP”), one Light Rescue Unit (“LRU”), one Turntable Ladder (“TL”) and one Ambulance (“Amb”) were immediately dispatched by FSCC. [FSD/G(I)/3] pp. 22-26 (A.S. No. 211/22-26)
9. The first fire appliance, i.e. HP of the Tai Po Fire Station (“TP/HP”), arrived at Wang Fuk Court at 1456 hours and the incident was initially under the command of Senior Station Officer (“SStnO”) HUI Kin-on who was the officer-in-charge of TP/HP.
10. Meanwhile, under the contingency plan formulated for Wang Fuk Court dated 13.11.2024 in view of the renovation works carried out thereon, one additional MP and one additional LRU were dispatched by FSCC upon receipt of the first fire call. [FSD/G(III)/7]
11. Furthermore, due to the shutdown of the Fire Hydrant/Hose Reel (“FH/HR”) System at Wang Cheong House, one additional MP was dispatched to the scene by FSCC upon receipt of the first fire call according to paragraph 3.1.2 (a) of the Fire Services Departmental Policy Instructions / IV/ 4.2.16. [FSD/G(I)/7]
12. Upon receipt of more than one fire call by FSCC, a SAR team comprising of one HP and one LRU were dispatched at 1454 hours. One Reserve Heavy Pump was also dispatched to the scene.

13. A MP acted as the Safety Support Team was also dispatched to the scene for overseeing operational safety.
14. On the other front, an Assistant Divisional Officer (“**ADO**”) on board a LRU was also dispatched to the scene for further support. In gist, a total of 12 fire appliances, 1 Amb with 61 Fire Services (“**FS**”) members, were dispatched during the early stage of fire. The magnitude of manpower deployment at that time had already reached around 80% of the PDA for a No.3 Alarm Fire (i.e. 79 FS members). [FSD/G(III)/11]

Firefighting Tactics

15. Fire appliances arrived at the scene immediately laid hoses for firefighting. Initially, 2 jets were immediately deployed towards the scaffolding structures at the exterior of Wang Cheong House where the fire started and was vertically spreading (i.e. the side where Rooms 104 and 105 are located). At the material time, the fire had spread to Wang Tai House.

SAR Tactics

16. Station Officer (“**StnO**”) WONG Tak-fai, officer-in-charge of HP of Tai Po East Fire Station, was dispatched at 1454 hours as the initial SAR Team Leader.

Operational Safety

17. Probationary Station Officer MA Man-ho, officer-in-charge of MP of Fanling Fire Station, was dispatched at 1454 hours as Safety Support Team to oversee the operational safety of frontline FS members.

No.3 Alarm Fire (1502 hours – 1533 hours)

18. The rapid fire development led to the production of large amounts of burning debris carried by the wind during the fire. Burning bamboo sticks and debris continuously fell from height, piling up on the ground primarily at the front entrances and rear exits to Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House.
19. In view of the rapid fire development and more resources required for firefighting and SAR operations, SStnO HUI Kin-on upgraded the fire to No. 3 Alarm after 6 minutes upon arrival (i.e. 1502 hours). At 1519 hours, ADO CHEUNG Lok-hang took on the role of Incident Commander. At 1529 hours, Divisional Officer (“DO”) LAM Ho-chun arrived and took on the role of Incident Commander of the No.3 Alarm Fire as per the established principle stipulated in General Orders (“GO”) 41. [FSD/G(I)/3]
pp. 22-26
(A.S. No.211,
22-26)
20. While the initially dispatched fire appliances were still responding from different fire stations, FSCC, upon notification, dispatched additional fire appliances to the scene in accordance with the PDA for a No. 3 Alarm Fire.

Firefighting Tactics

21. As stated in paragraph 15 of the Witness Statement of Ir Dr. TO Chi-wing, the fire had spread rapidly to Wang Shing House, Wang Kin House and Wang Sun House during the period. Initially, 3 additional jets were deployed at the open ground outside Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House to tackle the fires at the exterior of the affected buildings and the alight scaffolding sticks and debris that had fallen onto ground. Upon fire spread to Wang Kin House and Wang Sun House, 2 additional jets were deployed.

22. A total of 2 TLs were dispatched to the scene. The first TL arrived at the scene at 1504 hours and was positioned at the roundabout inside the Wang Fuk Court to suppress the fire spread among Wang Cheong House, Wang Tai House and Wang Shing House by the TL monitor. At 1523 hours, the second TL arrived at the scene and was strategically repositioned to Tai Po Road (Yuen Chau Tsai) near Wang Tai House for suppressing the fire spread thereat.
23. As mentioned in paragraph 18 above, fallen debris had piled up on the ground primarily at the front entrances and rear exits to Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House. The fallen debris were burning on the ground and the flames were engulfing the building entrances/exits, hindering firefighters' access to Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House. Although saving life is always the first priority, this must occur alongside firefighting efforts, as effective fire suppression is essential to ensure the successful implementation of rescue procedures. It is equally essential to secure a safe access before rescue operations can proceed. Firefighters therefore were required to make persistent efforts to extinguish the fire before clearing the debris and fallen bamboo sticks that were obstructing the entrances/exits, in order to progressively gain access to the interior of the buildings as the situation permitted.

[FSD/G(III)/1]
para. 5.3,
p. 49

SAR Tactics

24. StnO WONG Tak-fai arrived at the scene at 1503 hours as the initial SAR Team Leader. Later on, ADO CHOW Tsz-ho arrived at the scene at about 1516 hours and then took over the role of the SAR Team Leader (“**Rescue Officer**”) to manage SAR operations. Up to the period of No.3 Alarm Fire, about 50 assistance calls from the public were received by FSCC.

25. Simultaneously, D of FS instructed FSCC at 1522 hours to dispatch 10 additional SAR Teams, comprising 20 fire appliances, with 105 FS members, to Wang Fuk Court for supporting SAR operations.

Operational Safety

26. Members of the Safety Policy and Compliance Unit (“SPCU”) were dispatched by FSCC at 1514 hours and ADO CHOI Ka-wing arrived at the scene at 1548 hours, with the aid of the on-site Safety Support Team, to monitor the operational safety and provide safety advice to frontline members.

Supporting Initiatives

27. Given the rapid spread of the fire and numerous assistance calls from the public, D of FS instructed the activation of the Director’s Command Post (“DCP”), led by the Assistant Director (Corporate Strategy) (“AD(CS)”), at the Fire Services Headquarters Building at 1520 hours for the sake of monitoring the fire ground situation, ensuring timely deployment of resources as well as providing coordination, liaison and logistical support.
28. In view of the large number of assistance requests received, D of FS instructed the mobilisation of about 80 uniformed members from non-operational units at 1520 hours, immediately after the activation of DCP, mainly from the Corporate Strategy Command, the Fire Safety Command and the Licensing and Certification Command, for setting up a Support Centre with 18 dedicated hotlines, under the leadership of Senior Divisional Officer (“SDO”) of the Mobilising System Development and Maintenance Division, to assist in handling the assistance calls. While the assistance calls continued to be received by FSCC, the Centre collected updates on

[FSD/G(I)/2]
pp. 4-6
(A.S. No.
237/4-6)

the conditions and locations of affected residents, with the aim of facilitating appropriate resource deployment.

29. Once the No.3 Alarm was raised, FSCC started to deploy Compartment Fire Specialists, Highrise Building Firefighting Specialists, Breathing Apparatus (“BA”) Unit with specialists to monitor the overall BA operations and members of the Communication Support Team to maintain effective radio communication and battery checks to assist in the firefighting and SAR operations.

No.4 Alarm Fire (1534 hours – 1821 hours)

30. DO LAM Ho-chun upgraded the fire to No. 4 Alarm at 1534 hours in response to the rapid spread of fire as mentioned in paragraph 21, as well as the increasing number of assistance calls from the public that were received by FSCC. Additional FS resources were therefore dispatched according to the established mechanism and deployed for firefighting and SAR operations.
31. As stated in paragraph 15 of the Witness Statement of Ir Dr. TO Chi-wing, the fire had further spread to Wang Tao House and Wang Yan House during the period of the No.4 Alarm Fire.
32. At 1534 hours, a total of 48 fire appliances and 13 Amb with 269 FS members, were dispatched to the scene. The deployed manpower had already reached about twice of the PDA for a No. 5 Alarm Fire (i.e. 110 FS members). [FSD/G(III)/11]
33. Deputy Chief Fire Officer (NTN) (“**DCFO(NTN)**”) WONG King-man and I took on the role of Incident Commander of the No. 4 Alarm Fire at 1550 hours and 1618 hours respectively as per the established principle stipulated in GO 41. [FSD/G(I)/3]
pp. 24-26
(A.S. No.
211/24-26)

Firefighting Tactics

34. Within about an hour of the fire outbreak (i.e. 1551 hours), 3 TLs had arrived. Within another half hour, there were 6 TLs at the scene (i.e. 1621 hours). Before the No.5 Alarm was raised, multiple jets were deployed for external or internal firefighting with 7 TLs at strategic locations along the emergency vehicular access of Wang Fuk Court, Tai Po Road (Yuen Chau Tsai), Island House Lane and Yuen Shin Road, were deployed for tackling fire spread. To meet the operational need, the Water Supplies Department was requested to increase the water pressure or flow of street fire hydrants in the vicinity of Wang Fuk Court at 1600 hours. Meanwhile, numerous compact portable pumps were available at the scene to boost up firefighting jet pressures for firefighting operations at upper floors, and FSD drones were also deployed for aerial surveillance and heat detection.
35. In view of the fire development and situation, the Incident Commander, as instructed by DD(Ops), requested additional Senior Officers (i.e. SDO or DO) to maintain the effective command and control at the scene. Each building was assigned a Senior Officer for directing firefighting and, where necessary, simultaneously overseeing SAR operations. This arrangement enhanced overall responsiveness and ensured that specific operational tactics could be deployed by senior and experienced commanders in view of the actual conditions encountered in different buildings.
36. Multiple floors and units were on fire with some buildings nearly entirely engulfed, common areas, such as corridors and staircases, were filled with dense smoke and intensive heat. Whilst TL monitors were deployed to prevent fire spread, internal firefighting remained the primary strategy, i.e. firefighters were required to

enter individual units, most of which required forced entry, for firefighting and SAR operations. Firefighters could only advance progressively to conduct firefighting operations floor by floor. While firefighters were advancing to upper floors, reignition occurred in units on lower floors, potentially cutting off the retreat routes and making firefighters more dangerous. To ensure safety, firefighters had to move repeatedly between different floors for firefighting.

SAR Tactics

37. By 1534 hours, assistance calls for 35 units in Wang Fuk Court were received. The number of units required FS assistance increased to 59 units at 1623 hours. At the material time, the Incident Commander assigned DCFO WONG King-man, who possessed higher level of commanding authority, to take over the role of Rescue Officer and take charge of the overall SAR operations. Under DD(Ops)'s instruction, designated Senior Officers were assigned by DCFO WONG King-man to lead the SAR operations for the affected buildings. The Senior Officers collected the information of assistance calls, formulated and executed rescue strategies tailored to the actual conditions of individual buildings and maintained close coordination with the firefighting teams to facilitate the SAR operations.

Operational Safety

38. Ag DO Gerald KWOK of the SPCU arrived at the scene at 1630 hours and assigned his members to continuously monitor the operational safety and provide safety advice to the frontline members.

Supporting Initiatives

39. At 1610 hours, DD(Ops) CHAN Derek Armstrong arrived at the scene to facilitate high-level communications, observe the operational progress, provide on-site strategic advice/instructions and support.
40. At 1640 hours, DD(P&C) arrived at the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre (“EMSC”) to facilitate high-level communication and maintain close liaison among different Government bureaux and departments on the latest development of the fire.

No.5 Alarm Fire (1822 hours onwards)

41. In face of the development of fire at Wang Yan House, Wang Tao House, Wang Sun House, Wang Kin House, Wang Tai House, Wang Cheong House and Wang Shing House and the continued increase of assistance calls, DD(Ops) upgraded the fire to No. 5 Alarm at 1822 hours and assumed overall command as per the established principle stipulated in GO 41. [FSD/G(I)/3]
pp. 24-26
(A.S. No. 211/24-26)
42. At 1822 hours, a total of 116 fire appliances and 55 Amb with 718 FS members were dispatched. The cumulative manpower deployed had already reached about 6.5 times of the PDA for a No. 5 Alarm Fire (i.e. 110 FS members). [FSD/G(III)/11]
43. At 2230 hours, a cumulative total of 174 fire appliances and 47 Amb with 989 FS members were dispatched. The cumulative manpower dispatched to the incident at that time was about 9 times of the PDA for a No. 5 Alarm Fire (i.e. 110 FS members). At that material time, the appliances and manpower of Fire and Rescue Corps of Guangdong Province were known to be present at [FSD/G(III)/11]

Liantang Port. Having considered the available resources at the scene, DD(Ops) made the decision that additional manpower support from them was not required. For detailed explanation, it is laid down in paragraph 11 of the Witness Statement of DCFO WONG Sze-lut, Sunny.

Firefighting Tactics

44. The building-by-building command strategy had been maintained after its implementation throughout the entire firefighting and SAR operations. The strategy of floor-by-floor internal firefighting, in coordination with the SAR operations, continued. Multiple jets were deployed to the affected buildings for external or internal firefighting and a total of 8 TL at strategic locations were deployed for tackling fire spread.

SAR Tactics

45. By 1822 hours, assistance calls for 82 units in Wang Fuk Court were received.
46. At about 1906 hours on 26.11.2025, DCP instructed DCFO (Fire Safety) (“**DCFO(FS)**”), who reinforced with additional personnel, to assist in managing assistance requests and facilitating effective communication for the SAR operations at the scene, particularly communication among frontline FS members, FSCC and the Support Centre. He collaborated seamlessly with the Rescue Officer to facilitate the overall SAR operations.
47. In the whole operation, more than 100 persons were rescued from various locations in the affected buildings. Apart from attending the 347 units reported with FS assistance required, all remaining

units on all floors on the affected buildings were attended by FS members to check for possible casualties.

Operational Safety

48. On the other front, at about 1925 hours on 26.11.2025, having considered the increasing risk posed to the frontline FS members, particularly during the hours of darkness, D of FS instructed AD (New Territories South) (“AD(NTS)”), who reinforced with additional personnel, to the scene for overseeing operational safety. This arrangement ensured that safety decisions carried greater authority and that they could be made with increased decisiveness, facilitating the swift resolution of complex operational challenges and ensuring that safety considerations remained the foremost priority throughout the incident.
49. At about 1430 hours on 27.11.2025, the fires of 4 buildings, (i.e. Wang Shing House, Wang Kin House, Wang Tao House and Wang Yan House) were largely extinguished and the fires in the remaining 3 buildings were effectively controlled in good progress. As the individual units were reignited occasionally, the whole fire was eventually counted as “surrounded” at 2131 hours on 27.11.2025 and “under control” at 0315 hours on 28.11.2025. The message of “STOP” further mobilization of resources was delivered by the Incident Commander at 1018 hours on 28.11.2025.

Special interventions

50. Given the complex and extensive nature of the fire, FSD realised that the strategy could not rely solely on established action plans to address the challenges. Instead, the strategy needed to adapt and respond to the situation as it evolved. In this instance, FSD implemented some first-ever initiatives to tackle the fire as follows:

- 50.1 At very initial stage of fire, D of FS instructed to set up DCP, led by AD(CS), for backend support to the fire incident.
- 50.2 DD(Ops) and DD(P&C) proactively responded to the scene and EMSC respectively to facilitate effective communication and coordination.
- 50.3 The Support Centre, led by a SDO and manned by FS members from non-operational units, was established as instructed by D of FS to handle the large volume of assistance calls from the public. In total, around 1,500 call-back phone calls were made by the Centre to update the conditions and locations of affected residents.
- 50.4 DCFO(NTN) was assigned by the Incident Commander to take on the role of Rescue Officer and oversee SAR Operations.
- 50.5 In order to strengthen the command structure and effectiveness, DD(Ops) instructed that SDO or DO were deployed to lead the firefighting operations for all individual affected buildings. Additionally, separate SDO or DO were assigned to manage the SAR operations in individual buildings as the situation required.
- 50.6 AD(NTS) was directed by D of FS to the scene to monitor the operational safety issues.
- 50.7 DCFO(FS) was directed by DCP to the scene to facilitate the communication for SAR operations.
- 50.8 As at 2100 hours on 26.11.2025, 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 and engaged in various roles during the operations to strengthen on-scene command and coordination capabilities. Such arrangements were far beyond the required PDA of attendance for a No.5 Alarm Fire, which normally required only a single-digit

number of Senior / Directorate Officers.

- 50.9 In order to secure a smooth changeover of manpower at the scene at 0900 hours on 27.11.2025 without hampering the operational efficiency, a 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, instead of substituting the FS appliances already in operation at the scene by new-coming FS appliances on board fresh manpower.

Question 2.3 of Request 1

51. As regard the evacuation of the residents, as revealed by the frontline FS members, over 250 residents from different buildings self-evacuated to ground floor with the assistance of the Police and FSD to place of safety. Police assistance was sought to assist in evacuation. Safety advice was appropriately provided by the Rescue Officer, SAR Team Leader or the Support Centre when they were communicating with callers of the assistance calls.

Part B: The difficulties and challenges encountered during the Operation and Evacuation and how such difficulties and challenges have come about

Question 3.1 of Request 1

52. As mentioned in paragraph 7 above, the 31 floors of each block in Wang Fuk Court are linked by two sets “scissor stairs”. Each floor contains 8 units, connected by a “U-shaped” corridor. The corridors and staircases in the buildings are restricted by limited and narrow spaces that limited the working space available for firefighting and SAR operations. The corridors and staircases were found smoke-logged with intense heat, and multiple units at

different floors were on fire. Under these circumstances, firefighting operations were challenging, especially when firefighters were advancing to the upper floors.

53. Another challenge to the firefighting and SAR operations was caused by the rapid spread of the fire within the block and to the other blocks. The fire was believed to have quickly spread upward through the re-entrant in a way similar to a “chimney”, trapping hot air, flames and flammable gases as well as allowing them to rise rapidly. In an individual block, flame was observed to be spreading rapidly from the lower levels to the rooftop in a very short time. The rapid fire development within an individual block and its spread to the other blocks caused huge amount of burning bamboo sticks and debris to continuously fall from height, piling up on the ground and obstructing the entrances/exits of Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House at the initial stage of the fire. This will be further discussed below.

Question 3.2 of Request 1

54. In the early stage of the fire, large amounts of burning debris fell and blocked the front entrances and rear exits of Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, engulfing ground floor lobbies in flames, severely hindering resident escape as well as firefighting and SAR operations. This situation persisted, posing a significant threat to the safety of frontline firefighters and seriously impacting operational efficiency. While saving life remains the paramount priority, it is equally critical to ensure safe passages for escape and firefighters’ access are maintained. Firefighters were thus required to make quick and persistent efforts to extinguish the fire and then manually clear the debris and fallen bamboo sticks that were obstructing the entrances/exits, in order to progressively gain access to the interior of the buildings where smoke-logged with

intensive heat. The process was challenging because fallen objects continued to reignite and advances made through the debris continued to be closed off by more fallen objects, and given the size and volume of the pile and the time required to remove it, it was impossible at the time to have it completely cleared without compromising life-saving operations and exposing firefighters to risks of being struck by fallen objects. In fact, two firefighters working on the periphery were injured by falling objects and required treatment in hospital. Additionally, large amounts of bamboo sticks and debris covered part of the emergency vehicular access, affecting the deployment of fire appliances.

55. The fire spread rapidly into different parts of the buildings through windows of units and corridors suspected to be covered with polystyrene boards and the modified worker access points on staircases, resulting in ignitions and smoke-logging of multiple units and floors simultaneously. In fact, our frontline members reported to me that the temperature detected by the Thermal Imaging Cameras in certain alight units could reach 800°C, and around 400°C in some corridors. Even worse, the fire could spread with heavy black smoke rushing into the staircases through the modified worker access points on various floors. Such adverse situation had made the firefighting and SAR operations extremely difficult. Firefighters could only advance floor-by-floor via the staircases from ground level under intense heat and dense smoke to conduct firefighting and forced entry into units for SAR operations.
56. While firefighters were advancing to upper floors, reignition occurred in lower levels of the building, potentially cutting off the retreat routes and making firefighters more dangerous. To ensure safety, firefighters had to move repeatedly between different floors for firefighting.

57. During the fire, corridors and staircases were the primary escape routes for residents and access routes for firefighters. The staircase design should effectively block flame and smoke during fire, with smoke stop doors and fire resisting construction providing sufficient protection. However, in this No. 5 Alarm Fire, staircases were invaded by smoke and flames from the exterior early on that resulted in high temperature, dense smoke and very low visibility at the access routes within the buildings, making firefighting operations extremely difficult.
58. In certain instances, SAR Team members accepted heightened risks by compromising their working safety requirements, including advancing through burning floors to upper floors or delaying the use of BA while moving upward through staircases filled with hazardous gases, in order to carry out SAR operations.
59. During the operations, a total of 9 firefighters conducting firefighting and SAR operations inside the buildings were hospitalized due to heat exhaustion, physical exhaustion, breathing difficulties, smoke inhalation, or being struck by objects. Tragically, a firefighter lost his life in the line of duty after entering the upper floors of Wang Tai House at the initial stage of fire.

Question 3.3 of Request 1

60. During the fire, the building's FH/HR System was under repair. In this regard, additional manpower was deployed to attend the incident upon receiving the fire call. Meanwhile, the Water Supplies Department was requested at 1600 hours on 26.11.2025 to boost the water pressure and flow from street hydrants to secure the water supply to fire appliances at the initial stage of fire. Compact portable pumps were also deployed to boost up the water supply for firefighting at upper floors.

Question 3.4 of Request 1

61. As mentioned before, the fire was believed to have quickly spread upward through the re-entrant in a way similar to a “chimney”, trapping hot air, flames and flammable gases as well as allowing them to rise rapidly. On the other front, an east to southeast wind was blowing at about 14 km/h at Tai Po Kau wind station and 40% relative humidity was recorded at 1500 hours on 26.11.2025. The Hong Kong Observatory also issued a Red Fire Danger Warning on that day. [FSD/G(III)/10]
62. The above weather condition created an environment conducive to fire spread, and in turn posed challenges to firefighting operations.

Question 3.5 of Request 1

63. One challenge that might have delayed the Evacuation was the failure of the fire alarm systems. During the fire, the manual fire alarm systems failed to be activated in 7 out of 8 buildings and hence affected the evacuation of residents in those buildings.
64. Another challenge that might have inhibited or delayed the Evacuation was the rapid fire spread from lower levels to the rooftop, infiltration of heat and smoke to the common areas, such as corridors and staircases, and the blockage of the entrances/exits to some of the buildings at the initial stage of the fire. In view of the fact that most of the casualties / deceased were located in Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, it is recognised that evacuation was made difficult there because the entrances/exits to those buildings were engulfed in flames and blocked by fallen bamboo sticks and debris at the initial stage. In this relation, as mentioned above, given the size and volume of the fallen bamboo sticks and debris piled up and the time required to remove them, it

was impossible at the time to have them completely cleared without compromising life-saving operations and exposing firefighters to risks of being struck by fallen objects. The challenge would be better overcome and precious time better used by making utmost effort to gain access to the buildings in a way that was permitted by the situation at the time. As previously mentioned, while saving life remains the paramount priority, it is equally critical to ensure that safe passages for escape and firefighters' access are maintained. To this end, firefighters worked quickly and expended persistent efforts in extinguishing the fire and clearing the debris and fallen bamboo sticks manually in order to gain access to the interior of the buildings. According to my understanding from frontline officers, in the case of Wang Cheong House for example, 3 unconscious persons were found in the lobby on G/F by our firefighters after access was successfully made into the interior of the building at the initial stage.

Part C: The feasibility of broadcasting evacuation warnings through the EAS

Question 19.3 of Request 1

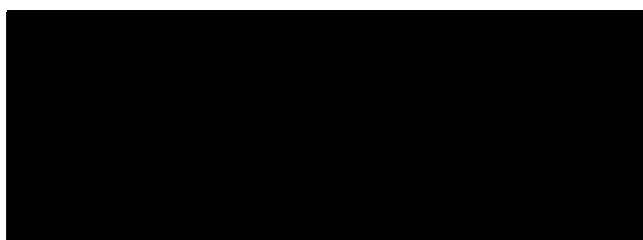
65. General Circular No. 5/2020 introduces the Use of the Emergency Alert System for Dissemination of Emergency Messages and elaborates the administrative process in using the EAS. The use of EAS pinpoints territory-wide emergency matters, such as massive breakdown of infrastructure, large-scale public riots, bomb disposals, etc., instead of localised incidents. EAS could only disseminate messages to all general public instead of specific individuals or groups of persons for a particular localised event, which was what was required in this case. [FSD/A(III)/3]

Part D: The concerns or complaints regarding the use of scaffolding nets at Sui Wo Court

Question 19.8.2 of Request 1

66. FSD had received complaints related to the scaffolding nets at Sui Wo Court since April 2024. However, since FSD is not the regulatory authority for the construction, alteration, dismantling, and use of bamboo scaffolding, nor the regulatory body for the regulation of protective nets, screens, tarpaulins / plastic sheeting materials used on the façade of buildings, no enforcement action could be taken. The matters were thus referred to the Labour [FSD/G(III)/6] Department and the Independent Checking Unit of the Housing Bureau in May 2024 for necessary action. Additionally, FSD attended the District Fire Safety Committee (Sha Tin District) meeting on 24.5.2024 to address the concerns of the residents and explain the actions taken by FSD. [FSD/G(II)/1] paras. 32(d) & 33
67. I confirm that the contents of this Witness Statement are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Dated this 16th day of January 2026.



TANG Wing-wah
Assistant Director
(New Territories North)
Fire Services Department