

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

Witness Statement YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy

I, YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy, Director of Fire Services, 9th Floor, Fire Services Headquarters Building, 1 Hong Chong Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East, Kowloon do say as follows:-

1. I am the Director of the Fire Services Department (“**FSD**”) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. I have joined the FSD for 34 years and 9 months since April 1992 and was promoted to the present rank on 26 March 2022. Subject to the orders and control of the Chief Executive, I am charged with the supreme direction and administration of the FSD.
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 20.1 and 20.2 by considering the factors and circumstances in paragraph 20 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 measures to avoid similar tragedies in the future in answer to **Question 20.1**; and
 - (2) **Part B** provides other recommendations for the Committee’s consideration in answer to **Question 20.2**.

Part A - Measures to enhance fire safety during large scale renovation works in order to avoid similar tragedies in the future

(I) Immediate measures implemented after the incident

Establishment of Quick Response Team to conduct full-scope audit check on the building fire service installations and equipment after fire incident

5. With a view to promptly and effectively addressing issues relating to building fire service installations and equipment (“FSIs”) identified at fire incidents, the FSD has established a dedicated Quick Response Team (“QRT”) operating on a round-the-clock standby basis, with effect from 4 December 2025. The QRT will be mobilised to attend all building fires, particularly where there are reports of abnormalities of FSI performance, in order to conduct on-scene checks of the condition and operation of FSIs and to take immediate follow-up or enforcement action where

[FSD/G(III)/9]
para.2

necessary. As of 15 January 2026, the QRT has been deployed to attend 162 fire incidents, 6 of which revealed defects in FSIs, where formal investigations and appropriate enforcement actions had been taken. This arrangement enhances the timeliness and effectiveness of post-incident follow-up on FSI issues and provides a more robust safeguard against deficiencies in building fire safety.

FSI Inspection for buildings undergoing major renovation works

6. In light of the potential fire risks of major renovation work projects, the FSD has immediately redeployed internal resources to establish a dedicated task force to inspect FSI status of buildings under major renovation works. The task force has been conducting inspection since 4 December 2025, with a target of completing of approximately 250 buildings undergoing renovation works by 13 January 2026.
7. During the inspections, functional testing of the fire alarm system (“FAS”), among others, will be conducted. Where any FSI in those buildings are found to have been shut down, the task force will ascertain whether appropriate additional fire safety measures have been put in place. Should any contravention of the legislation be detected, the FSD will take corresponding enforcement actions or make referrals to the relevant departments immediately, as appropriate. As at 13 January 2026, a total of 256 selected buildings had been inspected, 38 in which were found with defects, warranting further investigation and follow-up action.

Proactive warning to building occupants with notification of FSI shutdown

8. In addition, with effect from 6 January 2026, the FSD has introduced enhanced requirements to give occupants proactive warning during any period when FSIs, including the FAS, are shutdown. In such situations, property owners and management bodies are required to take proactive steps to notify building occupants promptly and adequately of the shutdown details, with the strengthened mechanism expanding the scope of notices and specifically identifying non-operable devices so as to prevent occupants from inadvertently attempting to use them during emergencies.

9. In particular, the property owners and management bodies will be required to (i) post clear notices at prominent locations¹, setting out detailed information on the affected FSIs; (ii) affix clear and durable labels on each affected defective FSI to indicate that it has been out of service, so as to avoid futile attempt to use it during a fire and thus to facilitate prompt evacuation; and (iii) use adequate means to inform all occupants (e.g. by way of distributing a written notice to each occupant's mailbox), thereby ensuring that all occupants are reasonably informed of the temporary impairment of the affected FSIs.

Engagement with Property Management Organisations

10. The FSD has been maintaining close collaboration with key sector bodies, including the Property Management Services Authority [FSD/G(II)/4-6] (“PMSA”), the Hong Kong Association of Property Management

¹ Prominent locations include entrances, main lobby, affected floors and outside FS control room of the building.

Companies Limited (“**HKAPMC**”), the Hong Kong Housing Authority (“**HKHA**”), the Hong Kong Housing Society (“**HKHS**”) and the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong (“**REDA**”). With a view to strengthening the engagement, a series of meetings with the above organisations have been conducted since 4 December 2025. The FSD has emphasised that, beyond arranging annual inspections of FSIs in accordance with the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B), property management bodies should proactively discharge their management duties by assisting owners in maintaining FSI in common areas, ensuring their continuous and effective operation, and incorporating regular visual checks into day-to-day patrol duties so that any damage or malfunction can be identified and rectified at an early stage. The PMSA has also issued a circular to the industry reminding them to fulfil these responsibilities and to strengthen their supervisory role over FSIs. [FSD/A(III)/8]

11. Building on this, the FSD urges property management organisations to step up efforts on the inspection to means of escape² (“**MoE**”) during major renovations, so as to ensure that all escape routes remain free from obstruction by construction materials, equipment or debris, and are readily usable at all times. The FSD also encourages property management organisations to conduct inspections of FSI in the buildings under their management prior to the commencement of major renovation works, and to ensure that such installations are maintained in efficient working order throughout the entire renovation period, thereby minimising the risk of impairment to critical active fire safety provisions at times when fire risk may be elevated.

² Section 2(3) of Cap. 95F - Interpretation of means of escape (逃生途徑)

[FSD/A(I)/4]

In respect of premises, means such means of escape as may be required for the safety of persons having regard to the use or intended use of the premises.

12. In addition, the FSD actively promotes voluntary fire alarm testing in buildings managed by property management organisations, both to address public concerns about the effectiveness of FAS and to enhance overall fire safety awareness among residents and management staff. As at 27 December 2025, about 970 (out of 1,350) residential blocks managed under HKHA have completed with the above functional tests. [FSD/G(II)/2]
[FSD/G(II)/3]

Public education and engagement

13. The FSD will also continue to promote and distribute the “Three Treasures” (i.e. fire extinguishers, fire blankets, and standalone smoke detectors) as well as fire escape hoods to households. This strategy aims to enhance overall preparedness for fire emergencies.
14. In addition, FSD will step up publicity and education for the public (e.g. through television advertisements), highlighting the importance of fire safety during major building renovation works, the need to maintain effective operation of FSI and the strengthening of fire safety education for owners’ corporations and property management companies. Starting from 7 January 2026, fire safety knowledge such as proper use of hose reels will be further promoted through various channels like social media, television short videos, and newspapers. On a weekly basis, promotional videos on fire prevention and emergency response will be broadcast on the FSD online platforms. Commencing on 16 January 2026, fire prevention and emergency response videos will be aired multiple times on TVB for five consecutive weeks. In collaboration with the District Fire Safety Committees, disaster preparedness and emergency kits will also be promoted and distributed to enhance the public’s capability to detect and

extinguish small fire as well as evacuating safely in case of fire.

15. FSD will encourage residents, owners' corporations, and property management companies to arrange fire safety seminars and fire drills to raise occupants' fire safety awareness prior to the commencement of major renovation works. At the same time, the FSD will remind management bodies to ensure FSIs are fully operational before renovation starts, and that any FSI repairs are completed before building works proceed, so as to safeguard fire safety during the renovation period.

(II) Medium-term measures being proposed for implementation

Building FSI Inspection Programme (Pilot Scheme)

16. Following the completion of target building inspections mentioned in paragraph 7, the FSD will proactively conduct inspections and functional tests of FSIs in about 1,500 residential buildings constructed on or before 1 March 1987, in the following manners where: (i) any notification of defective or shutdown about FAS and/or fire hydrant/ hose reel systems (“FH/HR”) from the Registered Fire Service Installation Contractors has been received; or (ii) any suspected lack of annual inspection has been detected. The programme will commence in mid-January 2026 and will run for two months, focusing on verifying the operational status of FAS.
17. Through these functional tests, the FSD will identify suspected defective FSI, investigate any negligence or malpractice on the part of registered FSI contractors, and take prosecution action against the owners of the affected installations and the contractors concerned.

18. During the inspections, property management personnel will be encouraged and educated on the planning and organisation of fire drills, and to promote the use of fire hose reel to building occupants. Also, the personnel will be required to strengthen inspections to ensure that means of escape remain unobstructed during major renovations.
19. Subsequent to the pilot scheme, the FSD plans to launch the second phase of the “Building FSI Inspection Programme” on territory-wide basis under which inspections and functional tests of FSI will be proactively conducted in approximately 32,000 buildings with residential components across the territory. The inspections will also focus on verifying the operational status of FASs and other FSIs, with a view to enhancing the safety of occupants.

Reviewing the operational strategies for mega-scale fire incidents

20. The FSD will conduct a comprehensive review of the operational strategies, application of new technology, as well as deepening the collaboration with Mainland counterparts to enrich the preparedness for mega-scale fire incidents.

Leveraging innovative technologies

21. The use of big data and artificial intelligence will be strengthened to analyse inspection-derived risk data and formulate targeted mitigation strategies. The rollout of Internet of Things fire detection systems will also be accelerated to facilitate early fire detection and improve overall operational efficiency. Lastly, the FSD will explore adopting the latest technologies to continuously monitor the operational status of FSIs.

Part B - Other recommendations for Committee's consideration

Enhancement of inter-departmental collaboration for major building renovation projects

22. In order to reduce the risk of similar tragedies in future, I recommend strengthening collaboration and coordination among all regulatory and works departments with responsibilities for major building renovation projects. At present, different departments each plays distinct regulatory roles, hence it would be desirable to put in place more structured arrangements to draw together and synergize professional advice from different professional disciplines, so that lessons learned from the tragedy can be addressed across the whole regulatory framework, rather than within individual departmental regimes.
23. In this capacity, the FSD would contribute advice from an operational and emergency response perspective.

Review of existing Legislation/ Regulations

24. With a view to further strengthening the overall fire safety regime, consideration will be given to conducting a focused review of the existing legislative framework governing fire service installations and equipment, so as to identify areas where amendment or updating may be appropriate. In this connection, consideration will be given to introducing a series of legislative enhancements, including:
 - 24.1. Amending the Fire Services legislations to strengthen FSD's regulatory powers by requiring prior approval from the Department for the shutdown of major FSIs (e.g. FH/HR

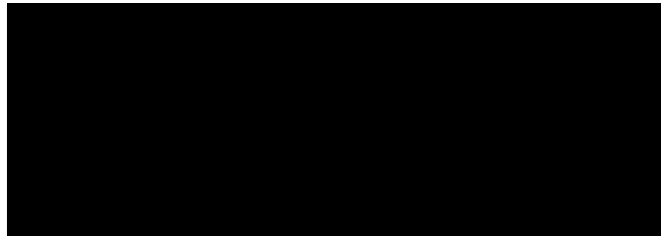
system & FAS) by RFSICs. This would shift the current arrangement from post-event notification to a proactive approval mechanism;

- 24.2. Introducing statutory responsibilities for property management companies by designating them as the “responsible persons” alongside owners and owners' corporations. This crucial alignment not only shares accountability but also encourages enhanced daily management and pre-emptive measures, fostering a robust approach to fire safety.
- 24.3. For those related administrative measures governing property management companies which are identified as suitable for codification, formally enacting them as legal obligation through amendments to the relevant legislation, such as regular inspection to MoE, arrangement of annual fire drill, etc.;
- 24.4. Establishing a fixed penalty regime for readily verifiable offences, such as failing to conduct annual inspections of FSIs, obstruction or locking of MoE, or failing to take the additional fire safety measures during the shutdown or inoperative period of the FSIs, to enhance enforcement efficiency and ensure consistency and deterrence in penalties; and
- 24.5. Substantially increasing the penalties for RFSICs who issue false or misleading certificates for FSIs, including higher fines and the introduction of imprisonment as a deterrent measure.

Further review

25. Subject to further internal review, as well as the findings and recommendations to be made by the Inter-departmental Fire Investigation Task Force, additional or refined recommendations may be put forward in due course as appropriate.
26. 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.



[YEUNG Yan-kin, Andy]
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