

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

3rd Witness Statement of TANG Wing-wah

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

1. I am the same TANG Wing-wah who gave a witness statement dated 16 January 2026 (“**my 1st Witness Statement**”) and one dated 19 February 2026 (“**my 2nd Witness Statement**”) to the Independent Committee (“**Committee**”) in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po.
2. I make this 3rd Witness Statement pursuant to Request 6 of the Committee as set out in a letter from Messrs. Lo & Lo, Solicitors for the Committee, to the FSD dated 2 March 2026 (“**2 March Letter**”) in which specific questions were raised in paragraphs 1 to 24 (“**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 2 March Letter.
3. This Witness Statement addresses Questions 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 24 of the 2 March Letter. Other Questions which are within the FSD’s purview will be addressed in the witness statements of other relevant officers of the FSD to the Committee. I understand that the FSD has indexed all relevant documents in its possession in Lists of Documents produced on various dates (collectively “**LoD**”) and a 9th List of Documents (“**9th LoD**”) to be produced, a draft of

which I have read. 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, [FSD(2)/A(I)/1] means Item 1 in Part A(I) of the 2nd LoD, and so on) without annexing them hereto for the avoidance of duplication.

4. This Witness Statement is divided into the following parts:-
- (1) **Part A** outlines the measures adopted by the FSD in alerting residents of an emergency in answer to **Question 1**;
 - (2) **Part B** provides the full details of the firefighting and rescue operations undertaken at Wang Fuk Court, including the timeline of the firefighting and rescue efforts within each block of Wang Fuk Court in answer to **Question 5**;
 - (3) **Part C** outlines the policies and mechanisms enabling the FSD personnel in collecting information and familiarising with the site configuration and building information/layout before arrival, whilst en route and throughout firefighting and rescue operations in answer to **Questions 6 and 7**;
 - (4) **Part D** provides further information on the deployment of turntable ladders in answer to **Question 8**; and
 - (5) **Part E** provides the layout plan showing the allocation and placement of fire hose(s), jet(s) and turntable ladder(s) for each material stage of the fire (initial arrival, upgrade to No. 3 Alarm Fire, upgrade to No. 4 Alarm Fire and upgrade to No. 5 Alarm Fire) in answer to **Question 24**.

Part A: Measures implemented in alerting residents of an emergency

Question 1 of Request 6

5. When responding to the incident, the Officer-in-charge (“**Oic**”) of all fire appliances (“**Oic Appliance**”) had switched on the audio and visual warning device (including dipped headlamps and sidelights) to alert people of the approach of emergency vehicles.

In this regard, the sirens of the numerous attending fire appliances and ambulances should have alerted the residents of the fire incident.

6. At the incipient stage of operations, the FSD received a substantial volume of assistance calls concerning Wang Cheong House. The entrance and exit of Wang Cheong House were obstructed shortly after the arrival of the first responding crews. There was also a rapid fire spread to Wang Tai House, Wang Shing House, Wang Kin House and Wang Sun House, necessitating a majority of firefighting and rescue resources on these buildings with a view to suppressing further fire spread.
7. As the FSD first attending crews were largely engaged in the firefighting operations and clearance of obstructions at the entrances and exits of various buildings, particularly at Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House during the initial stage, assistance was sought from the Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”) personnel to assist in evacuation. To my knowledge, the HKPF personnel had used the Public Address system in police vehicle(s) to urge the evacuation of residents. Evacuees were guided to places of safety on the ground level by the combined efforts of both the FSD and HKPF personnel.

Part B: Details and timeline of firefighting and rescue efforts

Question 5 of Request 6

Details of firefighting and search and rescue efforts within each block

8. A computer print-out of the incident occurrence log showing a [FSD(9)/G(III)/1] detailed chronology of the firefighting and search and rescue efforts undertaken within each block of Wang Fuk Court is now

produced in [FSD(9)/G(III)/1].¹ Given a host of factors including but not limited to the substantial number of assistance requests received by the FSD (totaling 373), the prolonged duration of the fire (estimated to be 43 hours from 26.11.2025 at 1451 hours to 28.11.2025 at 1018 hours)², the sheer scale of the operation and enormous amount of manpower and resources deployed to meet it (174 fire appliances, 47 ambulances and 989 FS members as of 26.11.2025 at 2230 hours i.e. only at the 8th hour of the operation)³, as well as the difficulties and unprecedented challenges encountered by different personnel at different locations and at different times, it is extremely difficult, if not virtually impossible, for all the firefighting and search and rescue strategies and efforts concertedly undertaken within each block of Wang Fuk Court at each time point of the fire to be recounted and explained in this Witness Statement with full details and precision, despite my best efforts to gather the relevant information. For this reason, the ensuing paragraphs will set forth the overall firefighting and rescue strategy, the progression of operations and the unprecedented challenges encountered at Wang Fuk Court.

Strategic context and operational challenges

9. To understand the progression of these operations, one must first consider the extraordinary complexity of this fire. This was an unprecedented incident characterised by an unpredictable fire spread across seven of the eight residential blocks of 31 floors. The fireground was exceptionally dynamic; heat and smoke raced through corridors and exploited modified worker access points in

¹ Reference to FSA No. (e.g. FSA-001, FSA-002, etc.) is to the FSA No. shown in “Summary of Communications – Fire Services Assistance Requests” at [FSD(9)/G(III)/6].

² See paragraph 49 of my 1st Witness Statement

³ See paragraph 43 of my 1st Witness Statement

the staircases. Notably, external fire spread along the buildings' re-entrants was observed, facilitating rapid vertical escalation. This resulted in multiple floors being filled with dense, toxic smoke and internal temperatures reaching lethal levels, with Thermal Imaging Cameras recording up to 800°C in alight units and 400°C in common corridors.

10. To manage this, we implemented a building-by-building command strategy. Wang Fuk Court was divided into eight operation sectors (Ops 1 to 8), with each block overseen by a Senior Officer, i.e. Senior Divisional Officer or Divisional Officer, responsible for firefighting. This arrangement enhanced the overall operational responsiveness and ensured that senior and experienced commanders were in a position to deploy specific tactical measures in accordance with the prevailing situations at each respective building. Operating within the Incident Command System, these Sector Officers carried out tactical-level responsibilities under the overall command of the Incident Commander at the strategic level.
11. The Incident Commander also assigned a directorate officer as the Rescue Officer to lead the Search and Rescue (“SAR”) operations. To ensure that life-saving efforts remained the absolute priority, separate designated Senior Officers were assigned to lead the SAR operations for the affected buildings. While the Rescue Officer exercised strategic oversight and resource prioritisation, these Sector Officers had devised tactical manoeuvres tailored to the specific fire conditions and assistance calls within their respective blocks. The Sector Officers responsible for the firefighting and SAR operations maintained close communication and coordination, and carried out operations collaboratively.
12. As mentioned in paragraph 50 of my 1st Witness Statement, we implemented several first-ever initiatives to tackle the fire. The

Director's Command Post was activated to provide 24-hour backend support for resource mobilisation and inter-departmental coordination. Simultaneously, a dedicated Support Centre was established to manage the surge in call volume, making approximately 1,500 call-backs to update the locations and conditions of the affected residents, a critical function that would normally fall under the Fire Services Communications Centre ("FSCC")'s responsibilities. This intervention significantly eased the workload of the FSCC, ensuring that it would maintain the capacity to respond to other types of assistance/emergency calls throughout this mega-scale incident.

13. While internal firefighting efforts in the affected buildings were underway, the Unmanned Aircraft System ("UAS") team was deployed to provide a comprehensive aerial perspective of the fire scene. In this incident, we utilised numerous drones equipped with live-streaming and thermal imaging capabilities to analyse the fire situation and provide supplementary high-altitude illumination during night time operations. Of note, the UAS team identified the locations of the two persons trapped on a building rooftop who were out of sight from the ground crews. By continuously monitoring the situation via the drones, our rescue team identified a safe window of opportunity to reach them and successfully led both individuals to safety.

Firefighting and rescue strategy

14. At the tactical level, the overall firefighting strategy consisted of a combined internal and external firefighting effort, with internal firefighting serving as the primary tactic. Internal firefighting required crews to confront intense heat and smoke directly within the structure, rendering it the most hazardous part of the operation. While battling the fire at the forefront, our firefighters were required to conduct dynamic risk assessment on the possible

extreme fire behaviour such as flashover and backdraught so as to reduce the possibility of injuries and fatalities of public as well as frontline members due to rapid fire progression. Separately, water was applied cautiously inside individual units to avoid producing excessive scalding steam and volatile gases, which would have posed a direct threat to both trapped residents and our crews. Indeed, every tactical advancement was a calculated move to secure access and egress while progressively suppressing the fire. Firefighting progress was largely contingent upon access into the building and its individual floors and units, the unpredictable development of fire within different compartments of the building, and the prevailing conditions of access and egress routes.

15. In addition to internal firefighting operations, the external environment was equally hostile. Burning debris fell from the buildings like raining arrows, creating a lethal perimeter that injured two firefighters and damaged two fire appliances. We had to deploy our turntable ladders and external water jets at strategic locations to prevent the spread of fire along the external façades of the affected buildings and to extinguish the fire of the descended burning debris. The falling debris posed grave threats to crews engaged in both internal and external firefighting operations – severing egress routes for crews conducting internal firefighting and creating direct physical hazards for crews performing external firefighting surrounding the affected buildings. The continuous descent of burning scaffolding materials and debris, causing obstruction, together with the intense fire, heat, and smoke surrounding the access and egress routes, constituted a critical impediment to both firefighting and SAR operations. Shortly after the arrival of the first responding crews, the entrance and exit of Wang Cheong House were blocked by descended debris and engulfed by vigorous flames. The immediate operational priority at that juncture was to suppress the fire within the burning debris and to endeavour to clear a viable access route into the interior of

the building.

16. Prior to gaining access into each of the affected buildings, the firefighting and SAR teams operated collaboratively to extinguish and remove the burning fallen debris. Once access and egress routes were secured, both teams would advance upwards primarily pursuant to a floor-by-floor strategy. Where rescue opportunities arose, the SAR teams would advance through the fire floors to conduct snatch rescues on upper floors. Concurrently, the firefighting teams remained vigilant against the persistent risk of re-ignition on lower floors in order to safeguard the egress routes for the SAR teams operating on upper floors. Despite the above, the SAR teams accepted heightened risks at times advancing through burning floors or delaying the use of Breathing Apparatus (“BA”) to expedite their ascent.

Progression of operations

17. Prior to the assumption of duties by Sector Officers, the firefighting and SAR teams had already undertaken snatch rescue attempts at various buildings. By way of example, a first responding officer entered Wang Cheong House and attempted to conduct snatch rescues and evacuate residents. However, the officer was compelled to retreat upon reaching the half-staircase landing of the front staircase due to intense heat and smoke conditions and narrowly avoided being unable to withdraw when the front entrance of Wang Cheong House was subsequently blocked by fallen debris and engulfed in flames.
18. Upon the entrance of Wang Cheong House becoming obstructed by descending burning scaffolding materials and debris, our crews endeavoured to suppress the fire and clear the blockage at that location. In the course of those efforts, one first responding team succeeded in clearing a narrow access route and entered the ground

floor of Wang Cheong House at about 1540 hours on 26.11.2025. At that location, the team rescued three residents from the ground floor lobby – notwithstanding that the front entrance of the building was being progressively obstructed by descending burning debris.

19. Senior Officers assumed their designated roles as Sector Officers starting from about 1630 hours on 26.11.2025. Before the sectoring of the fire scene leading by different Senior Officers, fire officers among the first attending crews had taken up such responsibilities at respective affected buildings. The incremental approach with tactical advancement strategy had been initiated at the outset of the incident and was consistently maintained throughout the operation. At about 1730 hours, access route to the 2nd floor at the material time became available in Wang Cheong House, the SAR teams took the opportunity to rescue three residents in a unit on a lower floor.

20. In general, once debris obstructions and flames were progressively cleared / controlled on ground floor and the lobby was rendered free from flames, the firefighting teams would advance progressively against heat and smoke. Attempts were made to advance to the higher floors for firefighting operation via the compromised staircases. However, this approach was modified to advance floor by floor commencing from the 1st floor as the units on lower levels were alight, cutting off the retreat routes. Despite the continuously evolving and adverse conditions, crews at Wang Tai House identified and acted upon a rescue opportunity at about 1930 hours and 2100 hours on 26.11.2025, conducting snatch rescue at a unit on the 10th floor and 14th floor of Wang Tai House respectively while the fire on lower floors was still severe.

21. In preparation for further advancement to upper floors, efforts were made to establish forward staging areas at mid-level of the affected buildings. A forward staging area is a temporary bridgehead on an unaffected floor near the incident scene, used for regrouping and providing spare BA cylinders and other backup resources. At Wang Tai House in particular, with the support of a turntable ladder, the Sector Officer attempted to secure access from the building's exterior into the 10th floor to establish forward staging areas starting from around 2200 hours on 26.11.2025. However, due to intense heat on that floor and the compromise of egress routes, such tactic was unsuccessful at that particular time.
22. Based on observations at the scene, the development of fire conditions was highly unpredictable. Rescue opportunities could neither be anticipated in advance nor guaranteed to persist, as common corridors and staircases could be unexpectedly compromised by dense smoke at any moment.
23. While the SAR teams made tactical advancements through fire floors, the firefighting teams operating on lower floors continued to extinguish fire on the intervening floors. The firefighting teams retained the operational flexibility to transition immediately into the SAR teams upon emergence of new rescue opportunities.

The nature of coordination with other agencies and how information received was integrated into search planning and execution

24. After the fire was raised to No. 3 Alarm, two Mobile Command Units ("MCU") were deployed to the scene. According to the established mechanism, the second MCU served as the Command Support/Inter-departmental Command Post, where the FSD could coordinate with other government departments, such as the HKPF, and consolidate important information gathered at scene.

25. For the assistance requests collected by the HKPF or from other parties on spot, MCU crews would consolidate the request information and disseminate the assistance call information to the Rescue Officer, who was responsible for the whole SAR operations. In parallel, the FSCC dispatched the assistance calls information through the FSD Messenger to the Rescue Officer and Entry Control Points established at respective buildings. To further facilitate the communication for SAR operations, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Fire Safety) was directed by the Director's Command Post to attend the incident to render assistance.

Part C: Policies and mechanisms for site configuration and building information/layout familiarisation

Question 6 of Request 6

26. The buildings of Wang Fuk Court are of the typical domestic building design commonly found in Hong Kong. Each building features a single corridor connecting all residential units on a floor and served by two staircases. Frontline members, including Tai Po Fire Station (“**TPFStn**”) personnel, are well acquainted with such typical building configurations and design. Likewise, the attending crews had considerable experience in handling emergencies in the domestic buildings of such typical layout.
27. Through proactive inspections / visits⁴, public education functions, fire talks and/or drills, regular street fire hydrants inspections, fire safety complaint inspections (such as obstruction of means of escape and emergency vehicular accesses (“**EVA**”)), etc., frontline firefighters are able to familiarise themselves with different site

⁴ On 19.10.2025, TPFStn personnel conducted a familiarisation visit to the EVA of Wang Fuk Court and inspected the street fire hydrants in the vicinity of Wang Fuk Court for better operational preparedness. The EVA and street fire hydrants thereat were found to be free from obstruction.

configurations and building layouts within their station boundary. In addition, such familiarisation is further developed through attendance at different requests for our assistance, including fire calls, special service calls, and First Responder calls, all of which afford firefighters repeated and direct exposure to the site configuration and building layout both within and occasionally beyond their station boundaries.

28. Regarding the familiarity with the site configuration and building layout of Wang Fuk Court, personnel of TPFStn maintained comprehensive operational awareness through the following: as detailed in paragraph 10 of my 1st Witness Statement, TPFStn personnel were fully apprised of the fact that the buildings of Wang Fuk Court were undergoing major renovation; consequently, a dedicated contingency plan (i.e. FSD/G(III)/7) was formulated [FSD/G(III)/7] in November 2024 with information such as factual background, layout plan and access routes etc. to equip FS members with the necessary knowledge of the site. Further, FS members (in particular those of TPFStn) would visit Wang Fuk Court from time to time, using the opportunities described in paragraph 27. These visits would also provide them with a chance to familiarise themselves with the configuration and layout of Wang Fuk Court.
29. As to fire safety issues and concerns, TPFStn was kept informed of FSI shutdowns via the submission of FSI Shutdown Notices by the responsible Registered Fire Service Installations Contractor, as referenced in paragraph 11 of my 1st Witness Statement. In response, TPFStn personnel conducted visits and issued advisory letters with standby means implemented to mitigate the risk associated with the shutdown of the concerned FSIs. Strategic arrangement was also made to dispatch an additional Major Pump to the scene in the event of a fire. In respect of fire hazard enforcement, TPFStn personnel addressed five complaints at Wang Fuk Court, as mentioned in paragraph 7.2 of the witness

statement from Assistant Director (Licensing and Certification), Mr KEUNG Sai-ming, dated 16 January 2026. In all five cases, the reported irregularities were successfully abated and resolved.

Question 7 to Request 6

30. Firefighters responding to an emergency call are provided with incident-related information through a Mobile Data Terminal (“MDT”) installed in the driver’s cabin of each fire appliance. The MDT displays a range of operationally relevant data for preview by the Oic Appliance, including:-
- The reported incident location and caller’s information;
 - If applicable, the patient(s)’s conditions;
 - Special circumstances concerning the premises, such as any known defective/shutdown FSI;
 - The suggested responding route;
 - The FSD resources dispatched to the incident;
 - The layout of the incident location, such as building(s) and street configurations; and
 - The locations of street fire hydrants in the vicinity.
31. In instances where additional information or clarification is necessary, the Incident Commander, Sector Officer(s), Oic Appliance(s) or any other FSD members may solicit assistance or information from any individuals deemed appropriate, such as staff from the property management office present at the scene.
32. Upon the arrival of the MCU, additional and more detailed information becomes accessible to the Incident Commander or Sector Officer through the computer consoles on board which provide connection to different FSD/government systems and access to the internet for gathering information. These include the Geographical Information System (“GIS”) map and different

building layout plans. In addition, General Building Plans would be brought to the scene by FSD officers from relevant Fire Protection office. Such information supports the Incident Commander or Sector Officer in developing a more comprehensive understanding of the buildings/premises (which are usually necessary for complicated layout, such as an industrial building or basement). Shortly after the arrival of the first MCU during the fire, DCFO(NTN) WONG King-man requested the MCU crews to display the GIS map of Wang Fuk Court to facilitate the strategic planning. The relevant information was available to the Sector Officers upon their reports of attendance at the MCU.

33. Based on the policies and mechanisms described in paragraphs 26 to 29 above, FSD members had no difficulties in appraising the building configuration of Wang Fuk Court.

Part D: Further information on the deployment of turntable ladders

Questions 8(a) and 8(b) of Request 6

34. Turntable ladders of varying working heights are strategically deployed throughout Hong Kong. The FSD's mobilising mechanism operates on one important guiding principle: dispatching the nearest available fire appliances, including turntable ladders, to the scene. This approach ensures that firefighting and rescue operations can commence the soonest possible.
35. One of the turntable ladder's operational priorities is to conduct external firefighting to limit the fire spread. Turntable ladders will take up available strategic positions around the affected buildings, primarily aiming to prevent a fire from spreading along the exterior of the buildings. Regardless of the scale or sophistication

of the turntable ladders, internal firefighting remains the primary fire suppression strategy for building fires.


36. During the entire incident, a maximum of eight turntable ladders were engaged at the same time. The turntable ladders that were dispatched to the scene on 27 and 28.11.2025 were for operational relief, ensuring the continuation of external firefighting efforts.
37. In the event that an operating turntable ladder required replacement, the process entailed time-intensive steps. First, the external water jets used to contain the fire spread had to be stopped; secondly, numerous hoses laid around the turntable ladder had to be repositioned or temporarily disconnected, with the nearby fire appliance(s) also needing to be repositioned to clear space for the replacement.
38. Although a 55m turntable ladder provides a greater operational height than a 37m turntable ladder in principle, careful consideration was given to maintaining the continuity of external firefighting operations during the active firefighting stage. To minimise any temporary interruption to fire suppression efforts by operating turntable ladders while significant fire spread continued, it was assessed that retaining those fire appliances in their engaged strategic positions would better serve the overall operational objectives.
39. In conclusion, given turntable ladders had already been deployed at available strategic positions for external firefighting around Wang Fuk Court and the EVA near the buildings became inaccessible due to fallen burning scaffolding materials and debris, further reinforcement of turntable ladders, regardless of their operational height, would not have effectively met the operational objectives. More turntable ladders would not be able to get close enough to the buildings.

Part E: The layout plan for each material stage of the fire

Question 24 of Request 6

40. The layout plan showing the allocation and placement of fire hose(s), jet(s) and turntable ladder(s) for each material stage of the fire (initial arrival, upgrade to No. 3 Alarm Fire, upgrade to No. 4 Alarm Fire and upgrade to No. 5 Alarm Fire) are provided in the 9th LoD. [FSD(9)/G(III)/3]
41. I confirm that the contents of this Witness Statement are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Dated this 1st day of April 2026.



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