

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

4th Witness Statement of YIU Men-yeung

I, YIU Men-yeung, of New Territories South Command, Fire Services Department, Lai King Fire Station, 6 Wa Tai Road, Kwai Chung, New Territories, do say as follows:-

1. I am the same YIU Men-yeung who gave witness statements dated 16 January 2026, 20 February 2026 and 11 March 2026 ("**1st Witness Statement**", "**2nd Witness Statement**", and "**3rd Witness Statement**", respectively) to the Independent Committee ("**Committee**") in relation to the fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po.
2. I make this 4th 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 and 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 deposited 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 11, 12, 13 and 14 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 7th List of Documents ("**7th 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.

Questions 11 and 12(i)

4. The following paragraph addresses Questions 11 and 12(i) which concern Appendix A-17 to the Interim Report.
5. The requested updates are included in the revised Appendix A-17 [FSD(7)/G(III)/1] prepared by the Fire Investigation Team of the FSD (“**Team**”). Meanwhile, the Team’s findings regarding the severity of fire damage to each of the staircases, lift lobbies and corridors in Wang Fuk Court are now provided at Section 7 of revised Appendix A-17.

Question 12(ii)

6. The following paragraphs address Question 12(ii) which concerns the existence of untenable conditions in each of the staircases, lift lobbies and corridors in Wang Fuk Court during the fire.
7. Since all staircases, lift lobbies and corridors in Wang Fuk Court are connected to the re-entrants of the buildings by opened windows or movable boards, and because the re-entrants are observed to be where the fire spread most rapidly and vigorously, the existence of untenable conditions¹ in the staircases, lift lobbies,

¹ According to Clause G6.8 Tenability Criteria of the Fire Safety Code 2011, tenability is normally determined by assessing one or more of the following:

- a. smoke layer height of 2m;
- b. radiated heat transfer of less than 2.5kW/m²;
- c. convected heat transfer, considering the occupant height and smoke temperature;
- d. toxicity, such as Carbon Monoxide concentration not exceeding 1,000ppm;

[FSD/A(II)/3]

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and corridors of Wang Fuk Court during the fire was heavily influenced by the progression of the fire in the re-entrants as well as other areas such as the individual units and the external walls, which was a dynamic and evolving process.

8. While the conditions of the lift lobbies, corridors, and staircases may be improved by firefighting activities after the onset of tenability deterioration, the conditions could be worsened by the fire's rapid development – particularly by its spread from the combustible envelope of the building into individual units. Once inside the units, the fire may have intensified, resulting in the spread of heat, smoke, and toxic gases into adjacent areas such as the lift lobbies, corridors, and staircases, thereby further compromising safety of evacuation.
9. Given the dynamic and complex nature of these conditions, which is highly dependent on the fire transition from the combustible envelope into the units, heat and smoke propagation into nearby areas, and the progress of firefighting efforts, the tenability of the staircases, lift lobbies and corridors in Wang Fuk Court during the fire cannot be ascertained due to the lack of details and information necessarily required for a proper assessment to be made (see Footnote 1).

Questions 13 & 14

10. The following paragraphs address Questions 13 and 14 which concern the approximate timing for each of the staircases, lift lobbies and corridors in Wang Fuk Court becoming untenable during the fire, supported by supplementary photos.

e. visibility of 10m;
f. smoke temperature not exceeding 60°C.

11. As aforementioned, the untenability in the staircases, lift lobbies, and corridors of Wang Fuk Court during the fire was a dynamic and evolving process.
12. Determining the exact timing of the conditions of these areas of the buildings, as outlined in Footnote 1, would require numerical precision and it is infeasible to do so for the reason given in paragraph 9 above. Nevertheless, a general estimation of when specific areas became unsafe for evacuation can be established based on available video footages and witness statements. With some analysis and tests, the time of onset of the conditions that impeded evacuation could then be estimated.

Analysis

13. The lift lobbies, corridors, and staircases were originally designed as protected escape routes. As mentioned in paragraph 4.1.5 of the Interim Report, one of the re-entrants is located immediately outside the lift lobby window, whereas another re-entrant is located immediately outside the staircase window.



Photo 1 (a):
Lift Lobby Window
(Before renovation works)



Photo 1(b):
Lift Lobby Window
(Photo taken after the fire)

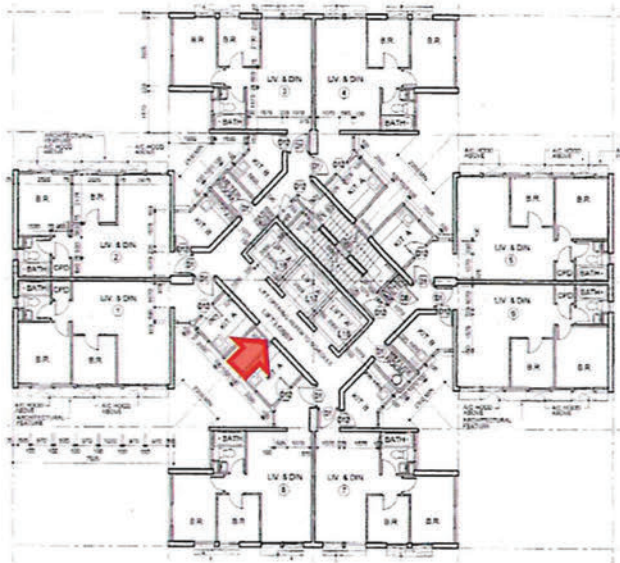


Figure 1 (a):
Location of Lift Lobby Window



Photo 1(c):
Staircase Window
(Before renovation works)



Photo 1(d):
Staircase Window
(Photo taken after the fire)

Remarks: For all blocks of Wang Fuk Court, all the existing staircase windows, of which the upper part was openable, were proposed to be replaced with fire-rated windows as part of the renovation works of Wang Fuk Court.

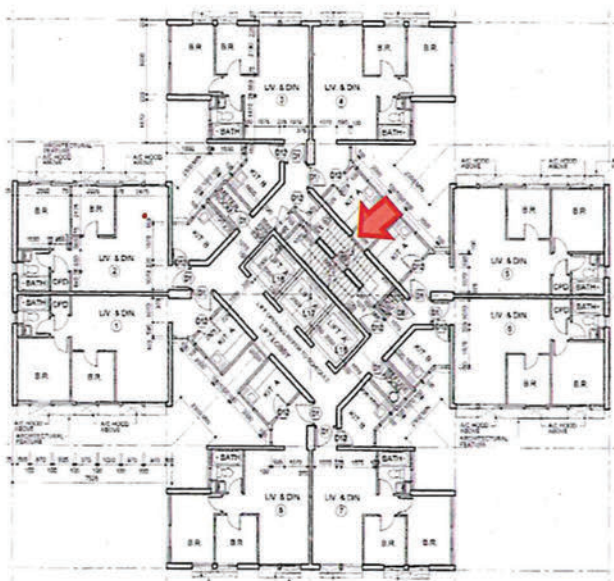


Figure 1(b):
Location of Staircase Window

14. It was only revealed after the fire that some windows at the staircases were replaced with movable boards, most of which were believed to be wooden and the rest of them were made of other materials, to provide convenient access for workers to the scaffold.



Photos 2 (a) & (b): Replacement of Windows with Movable Boards



Photo 2 (c): Replacement of Windows with Movable Boards (Wooden)

15. The upper openable portion of the lift lobby windows, along with the unprotected openings fitted with movable boards at the staircases, created a direct connection between the formerly protected means of escape and the re-entrants. During renovation,

these re-entrants were filled with combustibles and featured a triangular channel extending from the flat roof to the roof level, where extremely vigorous fire spread was observed in certain buildings. This configuration allowed heat, smoke, and potentially flames to penetrate those escape routes that were designed to remain safe for evacuation. As a result, the safety of these escape routes was significantly compromised, and as the fire progressed, conditions in these areas rapidly deteriorated, severely impeding evacuation efforts.



Figure 2: Rapid Fire Spread along the Re-entrants

Experimental Results from Full-Scale Fire Test

16. At the Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, a three-storey full scale model simulating the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 of Wang Cheong House was constructed to conduct a series of full-scale fire tests. The tests replicated the condition of Wang Fuk Court at the material time, with, amongst others, wired glass windows and movable wooden boards installed in the

staircase, and temperature measurement was conducted throughout the experiments.

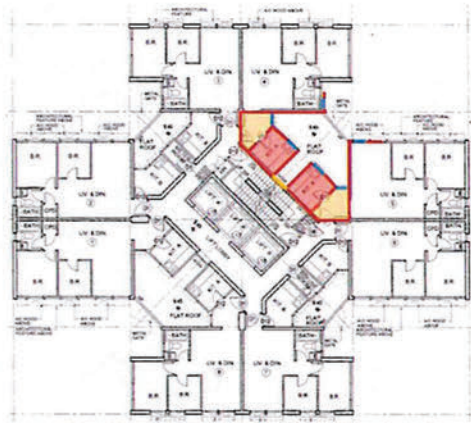


Figure 3(a): Replicated Portion of Wang Cheong House

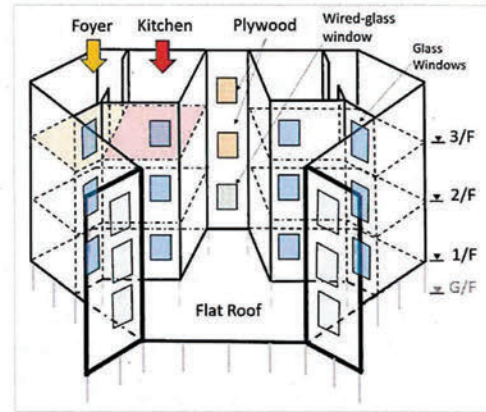


Figure 3(b): Schematic of the Test Model

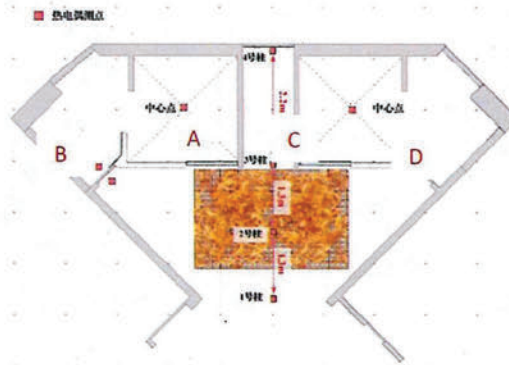


Figure 3(c): Temperature Measurement Points outside the Wooden Boards and Windows

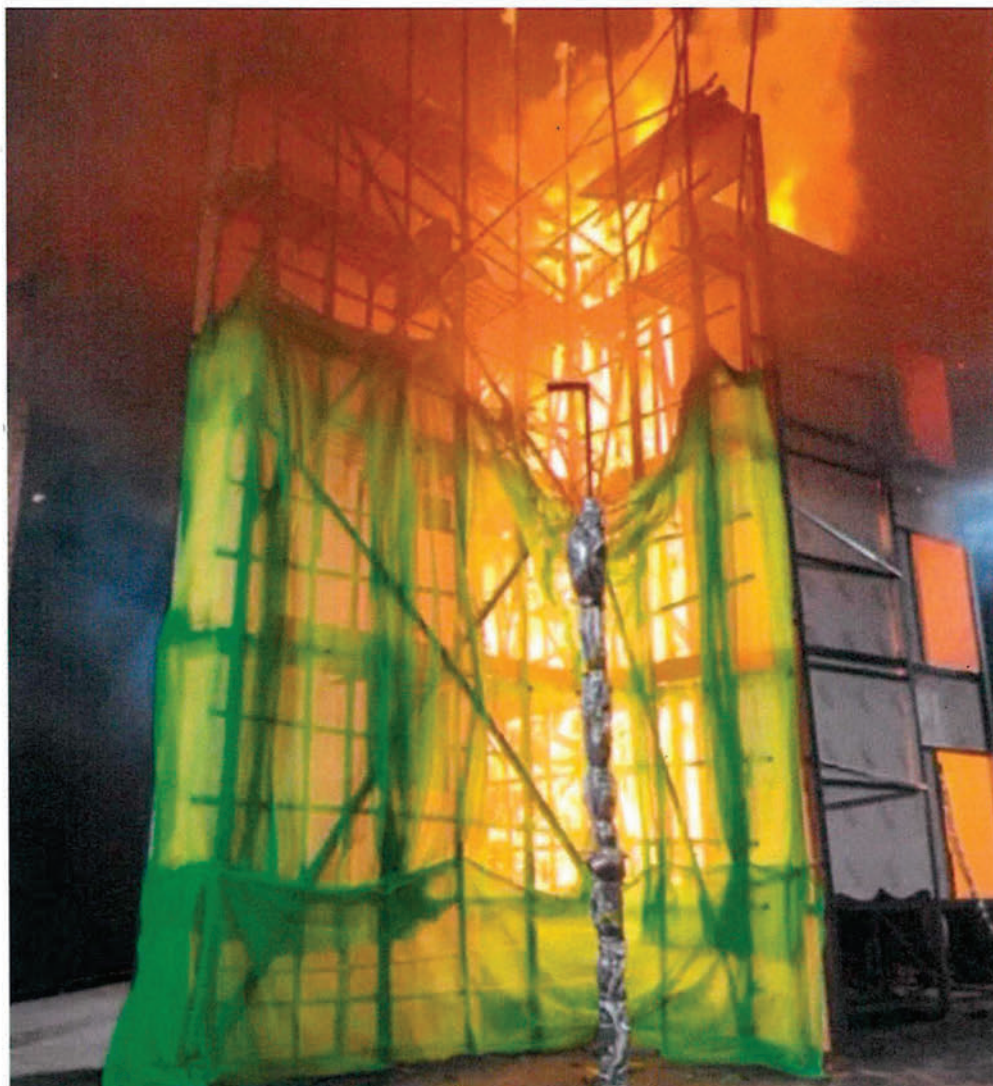


Photo 3(a): Severe Fire Development in the Re-entrant
Observed during the Trial Test



Photo 3(b): The Wooden Board on 2/F Ignited

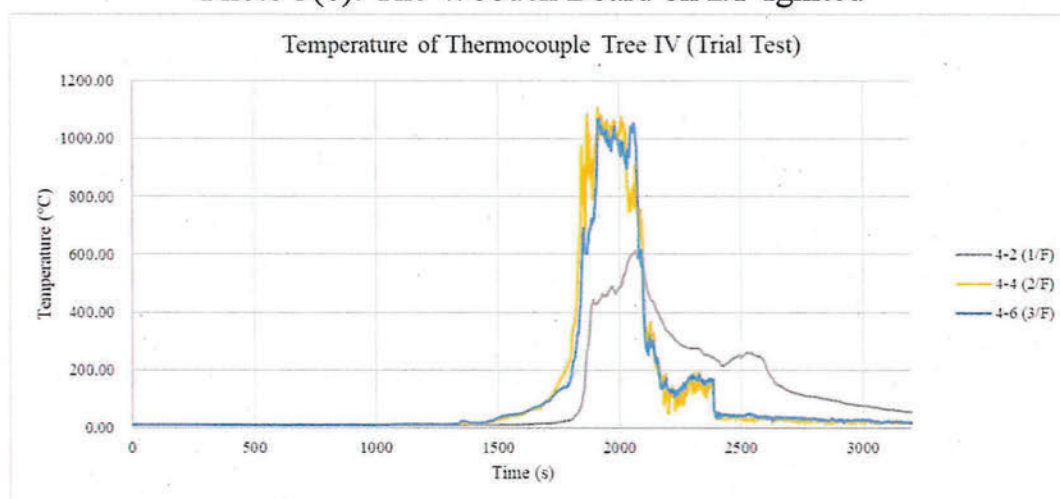


Figure 3(d): Temperature against Time Graph in the Trial Test

18. As observed during the trial test, the fire spread rapidly and severely along the re-entrant. The temperature on 1/F, 2/F and 3/F rose to 60°C after 30m 34s (1834s), 27m 13s (1633s), and 27m 4s (1624s) respectively.² The wooden board on 2/F was ignited by the intense fire in the re-entrant, which in turn spread through the opening on 2/F into the staircase void, with the peak temperature recorded immediately outside the wooden board reaching approximately 1,000°C eventually. This extreme heat, combined with the vigorous fire spread, likely caused conditions in the lift lobbies, corridors and staircases connecting to the re-entrant to deteriorate rapidly in the actual fire incident, thereby severely impeding evacuation efforts during the fire at Wang Fuk Court. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the lift lobbies, corridors and staircases at Wang Fuk Court became untenable as the rapid fire spread along the re-entrant was observed.

Untenable Conditions during the Early Stages

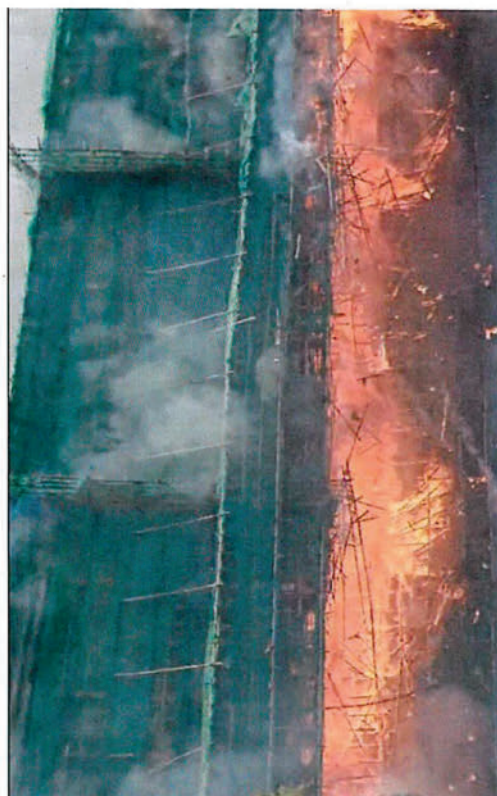
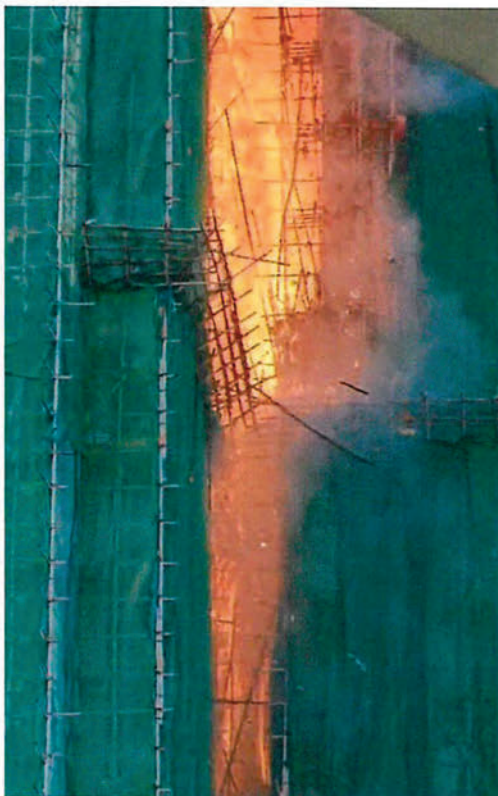
19. To fully convey the hostile environment that developed during the early stages of the fire at Wang Fuk Court, the following observations are provided alongside supporting photographs and captures of CCTV. These findings illustrate the rapid onset of untenable conditions, driven by toxic smoke throughout the corridors, lift lobbies, and staircases at various buildings, as well as the blockage of entrances/exits by collapsed burning scaffoldings. They showcase the extreme and life-threatening situations faced by anyone trapped inside these buildings at the early stage of the incident, residents and workers alike.

Observation at Wang Cheong House

² Data to be provided later in the Task Force's Final Report or in the Expert Report of Prof. YUEN.

20. The fire was observed to have started on the flat roof outside Flats 104 and 105 at about 1451 hours and it engulfed the entire east re-entrant at 1458 hours after about 7 minutes.
21. According to Mr. LI Ka-ching (as provided in Appendix A-24 of [FSD(4)/G(III)/3.24 the Interim Report), a construction worker in Wang Cheong House, he became aware of the fire at about 1450 hours and successfully evacuated to the ground level of Wang Cheong House at about 1500 hours.
22. During his escape from R/F by means of the staircase, he encountered smoke and heat. By the time he reached 14/F, he paused at the lift lobby to catch his breath and recover for about 30 seconds. However, upon returning to the staircase of 14/F, he found it to be filled with dense smoke, making descent impossible. With no other alternatives, he rushed into the lift lobby of 14/F and evacuated successfully by lift.
23. This observation aligns with our hypothesis that the vigorous fire spread along the re-entrant and the resulting smoke and heat would have caused conditions in the staircases to deteriorate rapidly, rendering them untenable for safe evacuation.
24. As shown in Photos 5(a) to (e), the movable boards of the rear staircase between 5/F and 6/F, the front staircase between 10/F and 11/F, and the front staircase between 20/F and 21/F were heavily damaged by fire. Correlating this damage with experimental observations shown in Photo 3(b) suggests that these movable boards might have ignited, with flaming subsequently blocking both escape staircases. Even if those movable boards had not yet been burnt, smoke and heat could still have penetrated into the staircase through the openings of the movable boards at the rear staircase between 15/F and 16/F, as well as between 25/F and 26/F.

This infiltration of smoke and heat would have significantly compromised the safety of the escape routes.



Photos 4 (a) to (c):
Fire Intensified and Engulfed the
Entire East Re-entrant of Wang
Cheong House with Falling Debris
at 1458 hours



Rear Staircase between 5/F & 6/F



Front Staircase between 10/F & 11/F



Rear Staircase between 15/F & 16/F



Front Staircase between 20/F & 21/F



Rear Staircase between 25/F & 26/F

Photos 5 (a) to (e):
Fire Damage of the Movable Boards

26. The west re-entrant of Wang Cheong House was connected to the lift lobbies via windows on each floor, as shown in Photos 1(a) and 1(b), with the upper part of the windows being openable. The rapid fire spread along the west re-entrant was observed at 1511 hours. Intense smoke and heat generated by the rapid fire spread would have penetrated into the lift lobbies through the openable section of the windows, significantly hindering evacuation efforts.

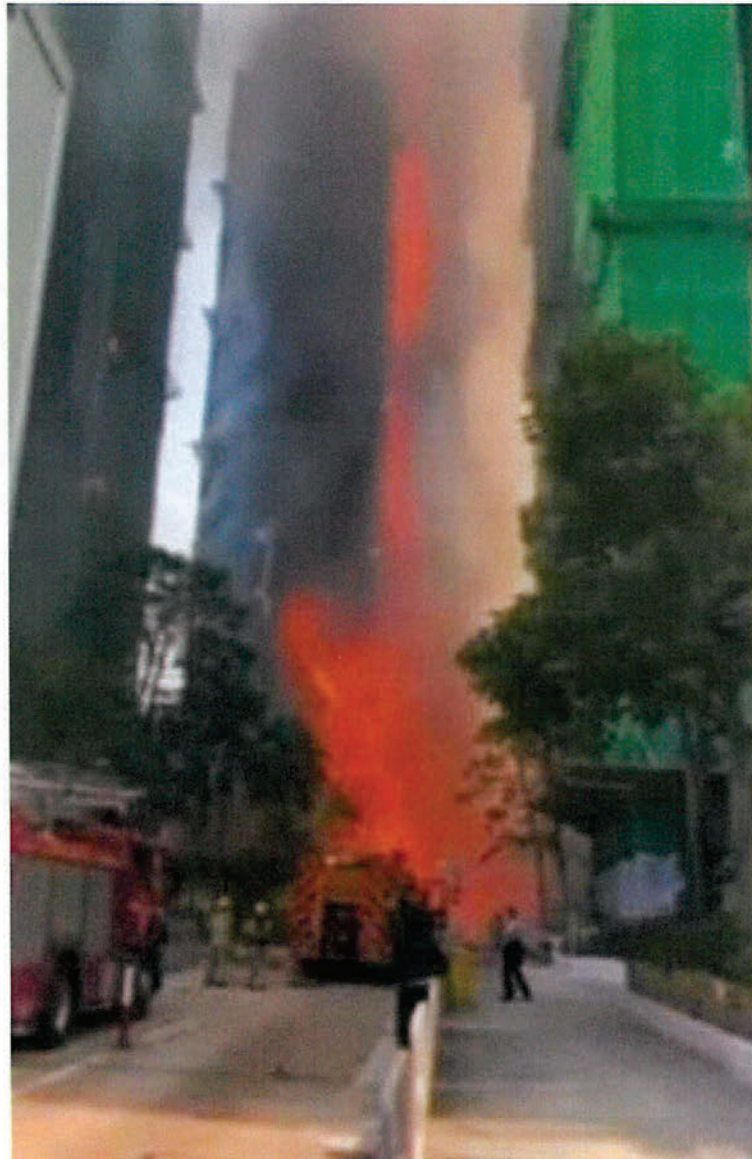


Photo 6: Fire Spreading along the West Re-entrant at 1511 hours

Observation at Wang Tai House

27. For Wang Tai House, vertical fire spread along the east re-entrant was observed at 1516 hours about 16 minutes after fire was first observed at the building at 1500 hours. The re-entrant is connected to the window at the lift lobby.



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

29. CCTV footage of Wang Tai House showed [REDACTED] entering lift L14 of Wang Tai House on 31/F at about 1520 hours³ (as shown in Photo 8 (a)). Another video from an online source showed that [REDACTED] encountered heavy and dense smoke entering through the upper openable part of the window in the lift lobby (as shown in Photos 8 (b) & (c)).

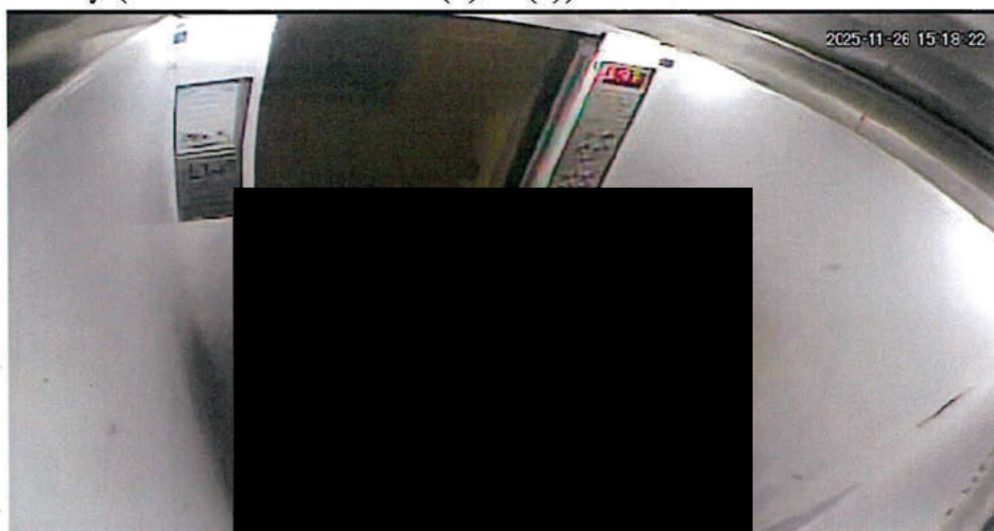


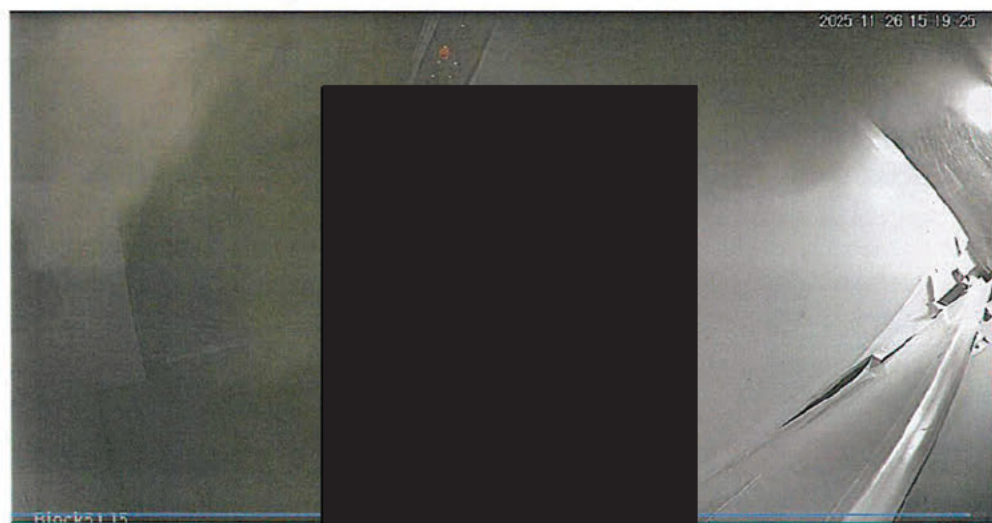
Photo 8(a): CCTV Screenshot Showing [REDACTED]
Entering Lift L14 on 31/F of Wang Tai House



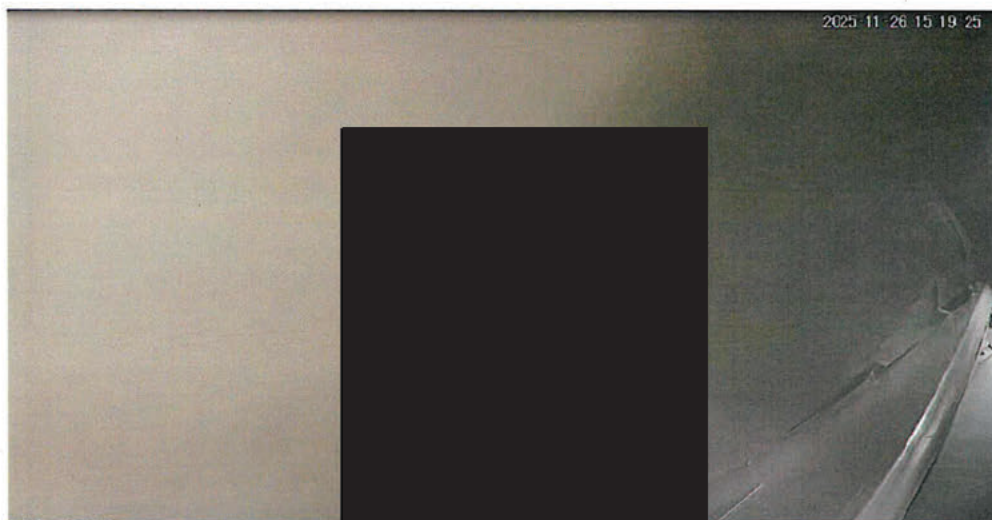
Photos 8 (b) & (c): Video from Online Source Showing Internal Condition
of Lift Lobby on 31/F of Wang Tai House

³ Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1518 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1520 hours.

30. CCTV footage showed a [REDACTED] believed to be [REDACTED], inside lift L15 of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours⁴. When the lift doors opened on 23/F, heavy and dense black smoke were captured to be infiltrating into the lift (as shown in Photos 9 (a) to (c)).

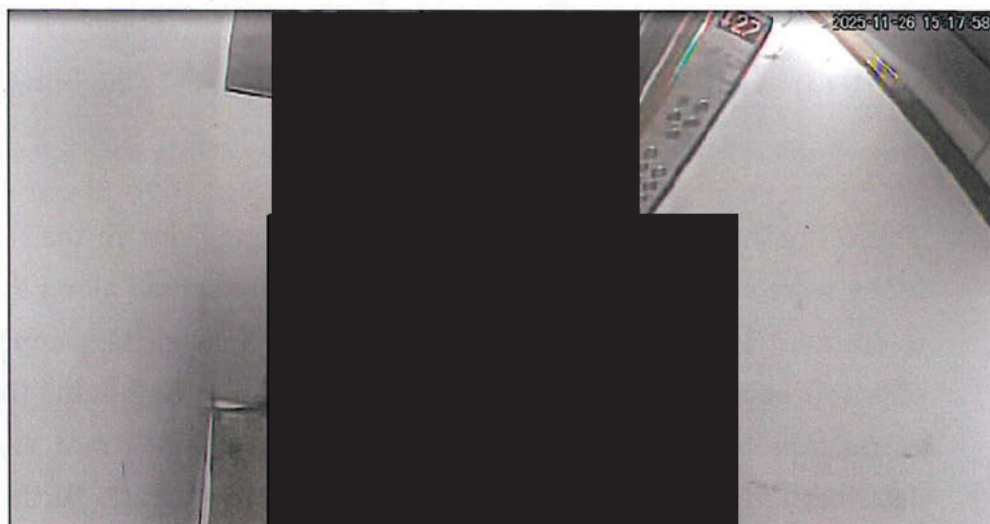


⁴ Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1519 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1521 hours.



Photos 9 (a) to (c): CCTV Screenshots Showing Internal Condition of Lift L15 on 23/F

31. Another CCTV footage showed a [REDACTED] believed to be [REDACTED] inside lift L13 of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours⁵. When the lift doors opened on 24/F, heavy and dense black smoke were also captured to be pouring intensely into the lift (as shown in Photos 10 (a) to (c)).



⁵ Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1519 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1521 hours.



Photos 10 (a) to (c): CCTV Screenshots Showing Internal Condition of Lift L13 on 24/F

32. These findings provide clear evidence that conditions in the lift lobby were closely associated with the rapid fire spread along the re-entrant. The infiltration of dense smoke through the upper openable section of the windows in the lift lobbies highlights the correlation between the fire progression in the re-entrant and deterioration of conditions within the lobby areas, further compromising evacuation safety.

Other Observations

33. Tenability along the means of escape is undoubtedly a critical factor affecting the evacuation of residents. However, in the cases of Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House, the obstruction of entrances / exits at the ground level should not be overlooked. According to CCTV footages, the front entrance or rear exit of Wang Tai House was blocked by fallen lit bamboo scaffoldings and combustible materials, making it impossible for residents to escape from the building through that means of escape.
34. Meanwhile, the initial Incident Commander of this fire, Senior Station Officer HUI Kin-on, observed that the front entrance and rear exit of Wang Cheong House were blocked by those collapsed burning scaffoldings at about 1505 hours and 1457 hours respectively. Whereas for Wang Tai House, the front entrance and rear exit were blocked by those collapsed burning scaffoldings at about 1520 hours and 1530 hours respectively.
35. According to the following CCTV footages of lifts L13, L14 and L15 of Wang Tai House, evacuees' attempts to escape were futile, resulting in their demises:
 - i. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who arrived at G/F at about 1520 hours using lift L13, failed to exit the lift at G/F due to blockage of the exit by burning bamboo scaffoldings. [REDACTED] peeked out from the lift but were too afraid to escape through the fire, as shown in Photo 11. [REDACTED] chose to retreat into the lift and went upwards. Unfortunately, the tenability of the lift lobbies on upper floors deteriorated so quickly, as mentioned in paragraph 30, resulting in the loss of [REDACTED] lives;

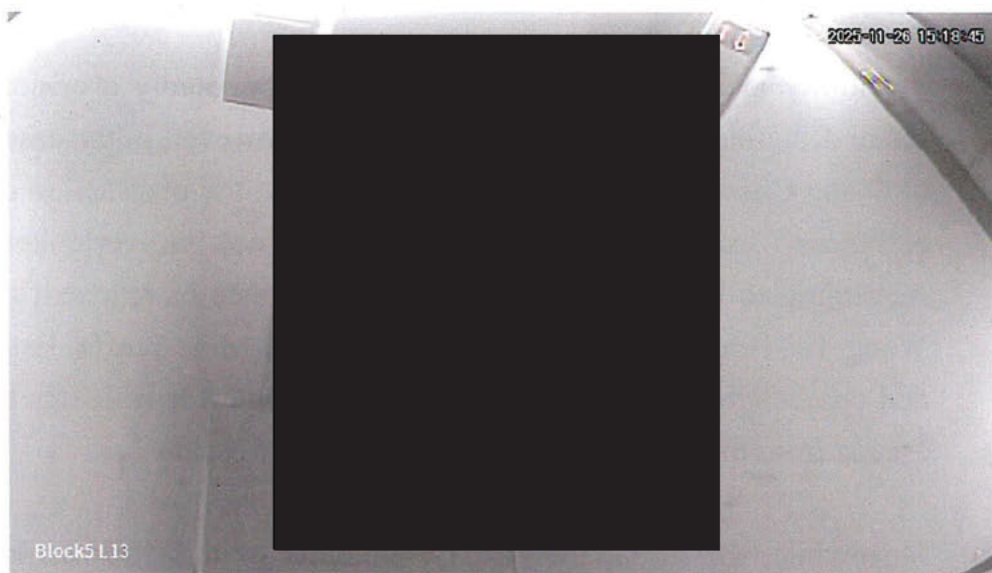


Photo 11: Blockage of Exit at G/F of Wang Tai House at about 1520 hours⁶

- ii. Similarly, [REDACTED], who arrived at G/F at about 1520 hours using lift L15, failed to exit the lift at G/F due to blockage of the exit by burning bamboo scaffoldings. [REDACTED] peeked out from the lift but was too afraid to escape through the fire, as shown in Photo 12. [REDACTED] chose to retreat into the lift and went upwards. Unfortunately, the tenability of the lift lobbies on upper floors deteriorated so quickly, as mentioned in paragraph 30, resulting in the loss of [REDACTED] life.

⁶ Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1518 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1520 hours.



Photo 12: Blockage of Exit at G/F of Wang Tai House at about 1520 hours⁷

36. According to the CCTV footage as shown in Photo 13, flame was also observed at the entrance of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours. Under these circumstances, even if [REDACTED] managed to reach the ground floor, [REDACTED] still unable to access a place of safety, further complicating evacuation efforts.



Photo 13:
Flame Observed at the Entrance of Wang Tai House at about 1521 hours⁸

⁷ Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1518 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1520 hours.

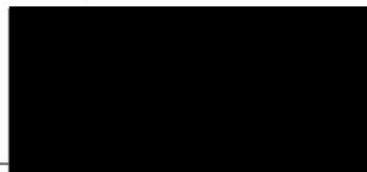
⁸ Although the CCTV footage was time-stamped at 1519 hours, it was approximately 2 minutes behind the HKO reference time, making the actual time approximately 1521 hours.

Limitation

37. Although the Team was able to demonstrate the correlation between the rapid fire spread along the re-entrant and deterioration of conditions in the staircases, corridors, and lift lobbies, the Team encountered difficulties in determining the exact time of deterioration for each of the staircases, corridors, and lift lobbies as not all re-entrants and not all buildings experienced the observed rapid fire spread. Furthermore, we can only deduce from the available information a brief account of the onset of deterioration, rather than making a quantitative assessment of the breach of tenable conditions in the manner mentioned in Footnote 1.
38. Even with the use of CFD simulation, it is infeasible to accurately determine the onset of untenability at each building, as factors, such as the fire point of origin, exact ignition time, initial fire size, and the distribution of combustibles in individual buildings, significantly influenced the development of tenable conditions. These factors cannot be determined with certainty due to the absence of eyewitness accounts or concrete evidence.

39. 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 March 2026.



YIU Men-yeung
Assistant Director (New Territories South)
Fire Services Department