

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

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
CHOW WING-YEE**

I, CHOW Wing-yee, Superintendent of Police, Hong Kong Police Force, of the Police Headquarters, No. 1 Arsenal Street, Wan Chai, Hong Kong do say as follows:-

1. I am the Superintendent, Operations (1), Operations Wing, Hong Kong Police Force (“**Force**”) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. I joined the Force for 27 years since about 1998 and was promoted to the present rank on 14 May 2018. My main duties include managing Operations Division (1), which is responsible for overseeing emergency response to incidents, coordination of the Force and external resources, preparation of mobilisation plans for Force-level operations, as well as running of the Headquarters Command and Control Centre, etc.

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 Department of Justice dated 19 January 2026 (“**19 January Letter**”) in which specific questions were raised in paragraphs 1 to 19 (“**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 which are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

3. In this Witness Statement, I shall address Question 18, a., b., and f. of the 19 January Letter and explain the policies and protocols for handling “999” calls by the Force (Question 18, a.); the division of labour between the Force and the Fire Services Department (“FSD”) (Question 18, b.); the sufficiency of capacity and staffing levels of the “999” call centres, the adequacy of the protocols to relay information to frontline personnel, and whether any improvements should be made to the “999” call system in light of the Wang Fuk Court fire incident (“Incident”) (Question 18, f.). Other Questions which are within the Force’s purview will be addressed in the witness statements of other relevant officers of the Force to the Committee.

Question 18, a.: Policies and protocols in place for handling “999” calls by the Force (including all scripts in use and/or procedures regarding the advice to be given to callers)

4. The 5 land regions (i.e. Hong Kong Island (“HKI”), Kowloon East (“KE”), Kowloon West (“KW”), New Territories South (“NTS”) and New Territories North (“NTN”)) are divided to be overseen by three call centres, each under one of the three Regional Command and Control Centres (“RCCC”) operating round-the-clock. RCCC HKI deals with cases on HKI; RCCC Kowloon deals with cases in both KE and KW; whilst RCCC New Territories (“RCCC NT”) deals with cases in NTN and NTS. Each shift of a RCCC is commanded by one Duty Controller at Superintendent (“SP”) rank, whilst his/her team comprises one or two Duty Supervisors at Inspector (“IP”)/Senior Inspector (“SIP”) rank, 8 to 14 Divisional Consoles at Sergeant (“SGT”) rank, two or three Senior Police Communications Officers (“SPCOs”) and 14 to 25 Police Communications Officers (“PCOs”). The “999” calls operators

(“**Operators**”) who handle “999” calls, namely the SPCOs and PCOs, are civilian ranks, and have undergone requisite training to effectively perform the essential duties of handling “999” calls.

5. I attach hereto as **Annex 1** a copy of the Force’s prevailing “Procedures for Handling 999 Calls”, which sets out the procedures for handling “999” calls in details.

6. All “999” calls are answered by the Operator clearly stating “999”, first in Cantonese, followed by English. If no response is audible, the Operator will state, “I can’t hear you”, again in both languages, and must verify the absence of a caller before terminating the call. Upon receiving a response from the caller, the Operator will proceed in the language as appropriate, asking, “What has happened? Which service do you require, police, fire or ambulance?” If the caller states that an accident involving injury has occurred, reports a fire, or requests provision of either an ambulance or fire appliance, the Operator will immediately inform the caller that the call will be conferenced with Ambulance/Fire Control. The location of the incident will be communicated by the caller when speaking to Ambulance/Fire Control, and the Operator will monitor the conversation and take note of the information reported. The Operator will further ask for any additional details from the caller before ending the conversation.

7. When a major fire, accident or disaster happens, it is common for the case to be reported from many sources. If the Operator knows that the caller is reporting an incident that is already being actioned, the Operator will ascertain whether the caller has any information about any victims in the incident, e.g. whether the caller is calling from inside the fire scene or a building opposite to the fire scene and can see people being trapped. In such cases the Operator will transfer

the call to Ambulance/Fire Control. If the caller is merely reporting the incident and has no additional information to supply, the Operator will thank the caller and close the conversation.

8. If the caller reports an incident requiring Police action, the Operator will obtain the following basic information, including “What has happened?”, “What is the location?”, “When did it happen? Is it in progress?”, and “Informant’s contact telephone number and name.”, etc.
9. The relevant internal guideline concerning the duties of the Operator is extracted below:-

“(a) Ascertain the exact location and particulars of informants;
 (b) Inform Fire and Ambulance Controls; and
 (c) Inform Divisional Controller, Traffic Controller and Duty Supervisor who will, inform Duty Controller if 3rd Alarm or above, or casualties reported.”

Question 18, b.: Division of labour between the Force and the FSD, in particular why “999” calls pertaining to fire matters had to be rerouted to a separate call handler within the FSD

10. As mentioned at paragraph 6 above, where a caller reports a case of fire, the Operator will immediately inform the caller that the call will be conferenced with the Ambulance/Fire Control under the FSD. The caller will then communicate the location of the incident to the Ambulance/Fire Control. Concurrently, the Operator monitors the conversation and documents the information reported. Following the deployment of FSD resources by the Ambulance/Fire Control, the caller will be transferred back to the Operator, who may request

additional details before concluding the call. Police resources will subsequently be dispatched as the circumstances warrant.

11. It is necessary for a conference call with the Ambulance/Fire Control to be initiated in respect of “999” calls pertaining to fire matters, as the Operator who initially answers the call is a PCO only specifically trained to handle emergency calls requiring the Force’s deployment but not FSD deployment. Therefore, to ensure the efficient and effective deployment of FSD resources, the PCO will immediately conference the call with the Ambulance/Fire Control if a case of fire is reported.
12. In addition, FSD does not operate a separate emergency hotline for the general public to report urgent fire cases. The general public always dial “999” for any urgent situations, regardless of whether services are required from the Force and/or FSD, with these calls being answered by a PCO. It is therefore necessary for the PCO to immediately conference the call with the Ambulance/Fire Control in cases where services are required from FSD.

Question 18, f., i.,: Whether in the opinion of the Force, the capacity / staffing levels of the “999” call centres operated by the Force were sufficient to handle the volume of calls received on 26 November 2025

13. A call centre that operates under a RCCC possesses a maximum concurrent processing capacity of 69 “999” calls, encompassing calls in active engagement with an Operator and those held within an automated queue. The number of calls that can be answered concomitantly depends on the number of Operators available at the RCCC call centre. Callers who are in the queue will hear the following pre-recorded audio message:-

“呢度係 999 緊急熱線，現時線路非常繁忙。你嘅電話正在輪候中，請唔好收線，保持鎮定，我地會盡快接聽你嘅電話。如有需要，你亦可以選擇致電就近警署的報案室求助，詳情請瀏覽 www.police.gov.hk。如只需緊急救護服務，可致電消防處救護車調派中心電話 2735 3355。This is the 999 Emergency Hotline. Our lines are very busy. Your call is in the queue and will be answered as soon as possible. Please stay calm and do not hang up. You may also choose to contact the Report Room of the nearest police station for assistance. For details, please refer to www.police.gov.hk. For emergency ambulance service only, please dial the Fire Services Communication Centre at 2735 3355.”

14. In the rare event that a RCCC call centre reaches its maximum capacity of 69 calls, the 70th call will be forwarded to another RCCC call centre with available capacity. Consequently, the total territory-wide simultaneous handling capacity of “999” calls is 207 calls (i.e. 69 calls per RCCC call centre × 3 RCCCs). Calls beyond this limit cannot be connected, and will be regarded as a “Loss Call”.
15. The call centre of RCCC NT first received a report of the Incident at about 1452 hrs on 26 November 2025. During “B Shift” (duty hours from 1500 hrs to 2300 hrs) on 26 November 2025, there were two SPCOs and 10 PCOs originally on duty as Operators at the call centre of RCCC NT. In light of the sudden surge in “999” calls resulting from the Incident from 1452 hrs to 2100 hrs on 26 November 2025 as compared to a typical day (such as 25 November 2025), 5 PCOs were then redeployed from the Divisional Consoles of RCCC NT to the call centre of RCCC NT to reinforce as Operators at 1508 hrs. Nonetheless, throughout “B Shift” on 26 November 2025, the call centre of RCCC NT did not reach its maximum capacity of 69 calls at any one time. Therefore, no overflow

forwarding to another call centre of another RCCC was triggered. In other words, there was no “Loss Call”. This indicates that, for the Incident, the capacity and staffing levels of the Force-operated “999” call system were demonstrably sufficient to handle the number of “999” calls, and the system was not overloaded during the Incident.

16. The following table provides information related to the number of “999” calls received by the call centre of RCCC NT from 25 November 2025 at 1400 hrs to 27 November 2025 at 0000 hrs, broken down by hour:-

Number of “999” Calls Received by the Call Centre of RCCC NT			
	25 November 2025	26 November 2025 (Incident Date)	27 November 2025
1400 hrs - 1500 hrs	199	176	98
1500 hrs - 1600 hrs	163	424	153
1600 hrs - 1700 hrs	173	264	124
1700 hrs - 1800 hrs	162	191	168
1800 hrs - 1900 hrs	144	200	169
1900 hrs - 2000 hrs	141	224	130
2000 hrs - 2100 hrs	113	252	106
2100 hrs - 2200 hrs	179	152	92
2200 hrs - 2300 hrs	113	154	91
2300 hrs - 0000 hrs	82	88	76
Total	1,469	2,125	1,207

Question 18, f., ii.: Whether in the opinion of the Force, the protocols in place to relay information to frontline personnel were adequate

17. Upon acquiring the necessary information from an informant through a “999” call, including but not limited to the informant’s details, location and content of the “999” call, the Operator will create an Incident Log (“**IN Log**”) for the case within the Computer Assisted Command & Control System (“**CACCS3**”), which is an

internal system utilised by all RCCC personnel. The relevant details will be recorded in the IN Log and routed to the appropriate Divisional Controller for the deployment of Police resources. Upon receipt of the case, the Divisional Console will deploy suitable Police resources to the scene for response and relay essential information to the frontline personnel via the Police Beat Radio. Simultaneously, a Report Number (“**RN**”) will be created in the Case Management and Investigation System (“**CMIS**”), which is an internal system utilised by all police officers and civilians for the management and investigation of cases. All information recorded in the IN Log on CACCS3 will be synchronised with the RN on the CMIS, thereby enabling all police officers and civilians to access the information contained within the IN Log from the CMIS at any time.

18. In instances where multiple calls are received for the same incident, all information will be entered into the same IN Log, irrespective of whether the same Operator answered the calls, and the IN Log will be continuously updated whenever new information is received until the incident concludes. Police officers at Headquarters, Regional (inclusive of all RCCC personnel), District and Divisional levels are entitled to refer to the IN Log at any time, thereby ensuring that information received by the Operators is instantly accessible to all relevant police officers with involvement in the case across the Force.
19. Subsequent to the handling of the case at the scene, frontline officers will report the progress of the case to the Divisional Controller, who will then record the information in the IN Log. The Divisional Controller will closely monitor the IN Log for the most up-to-date situation and provide appropriate support to the frontline personnel as necessary.

20. The protocols in place to relay information to frontline personnel are not merely adequate, but have also demonstrated to be highly reliable and effective. During the Incident, the information received by the Operators was communicated smoothly, promptly and accurately to the frontline personnel in real-time, with an effective flow without any delays, deficiencies, or significant ambiguity observed.

Question 18, f., iii. & 18, f., iv.: Whether in the opinion of the Force, any improvements could and/or should be made to the policies and procedures of the “999” call system in light of the Wang Fuk Court Fire; any technical improvements to the “999” call system (such as mandatory caller ID displays or automatic location sharing) could have better facilitated the rescue of Wang Fuk Court

21. Upon the conclusion of the criminal investigation, a comprehensive review of the Incident will be undertaken by the Force in a timely manner, incorporating the findings, comments and recommendations (if any) from the Committee with a view to identifying potential areas for improvement in the policies, procedures, and technical aspects of the “999” call system.
22. In my opinion, the communications between the Force and other Government departments had been executed effectively on the day of the Incident. As mentioned at paragraph 15 above, where PCOs were redeployed in light of the sudden surge in “999” calls resulting from the Incident from 1452 hrs to 2100 hrs on 26 November 2025 as compared to a typical day (such as 25 November 2025), the call centre of RCCC NT did not reach its maximum capacity of 69 calls at any one time throughout “B Shift” on 26 November 2025 and no overflow forwarding to another call centre of another RCCC was triggered. The capacity and staffing levels of the Force-operated

“999” call system are considered sufficient to handle the number of “999” calls in an efficient manner.

23. When members of the public make a “999” call with smartphones with SIM card or via landlines seeking emergency assistance, their caller ID would automatically be displayed to “999” call centres. In addition, for callers calling “999” using smartphones, the Advanced Mobile Location service of the “999” Console will also receive the individual’s Global Positioning System (GPS) location as generated by the smartphone, thus enabling an instantaneous and effective location of the caller to be known. In my opinion, the existing technological measures had enabled RCCC to effectively identify the callers’ origin and thereby make instantaneous and appropriate deployment of resources to facilitate the rescue work at Wang Fuk Court. Nonetheless, the Force would continue to explore the use of technology to further improve the internal and external communications and the “999” system in the future.
24. I confirm that the contents of this Witness Statement are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Dated this 23rd day of February 2026.



CHOW Wing-yee