

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

Evidential Hearing

**The Honourable Mr Justice David Lok
The Honourable Mr Chan Kin-por, GBS, JP
Dr Rex Auyeung Pak-kuen, GBS, JP**

**On:
Day 11
Monday, 13 April 2026**

**Mr Victor Dawes SC, Mr Jason Yu, Mr SW Lee, Mr Jonathan Fung,
Mr John Cheung and Mr Brian Lee appeared on behalf of the Independent
Committee**

**Mr Jenkin Suen SC, Mr Michael Lok, Mr Calvin Cheuk and Mr Charlie
Liu appeared on behalf of the Government**

Mr Jeffrey Tam appeared on behalf of the residents of Wang Fuk Court

**Mr Martin Ho and Mr Cedric Yeung appeared on behalf of ISS EastPoint
Properties Ltd**

Representatives of Department of Justice

Representatives of Competition Commission

Solicitor for Hop On Management Company Limited

**Mr Mike Lui SC and Mr Ross Yuen appeared on behalf of the Urban
Renewal Authority**

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<p>1 Monday, 13 April 2026</p> <p>2 (10.00 am)</p> <p>3 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Mr Lee.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: Good morning, chairman. There are four</p> <p>5 witnesses today. They are all from the Fire Services</p> <p>6 Department.</p> <p>7 Before I start, let me give a brief introduction of</p> <p>8 the involvement of the four witnesses. The first one is</p> <p>9 Mr Hui Kin On who is a senior station officer; the</p> <p>10 second one is Mr Cheung Lok Hang, who is the station</p> <p>11 commander of Tai Po as well as the deputy division</p> <p>12 officer; the third one is Mr Lam Ho Chun, deputy</p> <p>13 divisional commander of NT East; and the last one is</p> <p>14 Mr Wong King Man, the then deputy chief fire officer.</p> <p>15 Mr Wong is on pre-retirement leave but he will be here</p> <p>16 to give evidence.</p> <p>17 The four officers on the day of the fire were at</p> <p>18 different points in time the incident commanders at</p> <p>19 different locations. We would like to use the evidence</p> <p>20 of the four witnesses to give you information about the</p> <p>21 firefighting and rescue operation as well as the</p> <p>22 challenges they faced.</p> <p>23 In the process of examination it's very likely that</p> <p>24 we will look at clips of the fire as well as photos</p> <p>25 post-fire. Those who are attending the evidential</p>	<p>1 statement to the police. Subsequently you also provided</p> <p>2 one witness statement to the Committee; right?</p> <p>3 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: I believe that the contents of both witness</p> <p>5 statements are true to your knowledge and belief; right?</p> <p>6 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: I will take you through the situation you faced</p> <p>8 on that day when you were on duty and during the fire.</p> <p>9 We are aware that there were difficulties when it comes</p> <p>10 to rescue and firefighting on that day. I may touch on</p> <p>11 questions that may be quite difficult for you or may</p> <p>12 come across as criticisms to you but that is not the</p> <p>13 case. We just want to look into the difficulties faced</p> <p>14 by firefighters at the scene when it comes to</p> <p>15 firefighting and rescue so that we can identify areas of</p> <p>16 improvement when it comes to FSD's guidelines,</p> <p>17 equipment, as well as apparatus. I hope you understand</p> <p>18 where we come from.</p> <p>19 MR HUI KIN ON: I understand.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: I rely on one document quite often. It's B10,</p> <p>21 page 5087. It's an incident occurrence record. It's</p> <p>22 easy to follow the chronology of the event on that day</p> <p>23 using this document.</p> <p>24 This was prepared after the incident. You see the</p> <p>25 date under the pagination, it is 26 November, that is</p>
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<p>1 hearing might feel uneasy from looking at these clips</p> <p>2 and photographs. Let me remind the attendees that at</p> <p>3 the scene here, at the venue, as well as in the Central</p> <p>4 Library, there are available resources for psychological</p> <p>5 support.</p> <p>6 We will first call Mr Hui Kin On.</p> <p>7 Mr Hui, before you testify, please stand up and read</p> <p>8 the declaration before you.</p> <p>9 (10.02 am)</p> <p>10 MR HUI KIN ON (affirmed)</p> <p>11 Examination by MR SW LEE</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: Please be seated. Mr Hui, we understand that</p> <p>13 you joined the FSD in 2013.</p> <p>14 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: And in 2018 or so you were promoted to the</p> <p>16 position of a senior station officer.</p> <p>17 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: On the day of the fire, that is 26 November</p> <p>19 2025, you were stationed at the Tai Po station, the</p> <p>20 commander of division B?</p> <p>21 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>22 MR SW LEE: You were one of the officers in the first batch</p> <p>23 who arrived at the scene; right?</p> <p>24 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: We understand that you have provided one witness</p>	<p>1 the day of the fire. There is an information stating</p> <p>2 "Time of call", that we think is the first call for</p> <p>3 assistance made to the FSD. It's 14:51.</p> <p>4 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: Let's look at the table. There is a message</p> <p>6 which reads:</p> <p>7 "Wang Cheong House, Wang Fuk Court."</p> <p>8 The information provided by the caller states that</p> <p>9 there is a "fire involving scaffolding on external wall</p> <p>10 with explosion occurred."</p> <p>11 You see this message; right?</p> <p>12 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes, I see it.</p> <p>13 MR SW LEE: We read on. 14:52:42. The message reads</p> <p>14 acknowledgement by you and there is a number, 2336, that</p> <p>15 is your service number?</p> <p>16 MR HUI KIN ON: That's the licence plate of the fire</p> <p>17 appliance.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: It says "senior station officer". It's you,</p> <p>19 Mr Hui; right?</p> <p>20 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: Within one minute 25 seconds from the time when</p> <p>22 the call was made you received the call for assistance?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: I believe that you and your crew were dispatched</p> <p>25 to the scene of the fire, Wang Fuk Court; right?</p>

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<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: You were in charge of a hydraulic platform;</p> <p>3 right?</p> <p>4 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: On the appliance there were you and five other</p> <p>6 colleagues; right?</p> <p>7 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: At 14:51, that is the message before your</p> <p>9 acknowledgement, it's something to do with the Ma On</p> <p>10 Shan fire station. It says:</p> <p>11 "Additional MP due to FSI defective, numerous calls</p> <p>12 received ..."</p> <p>13 Then a licence plate of the fire engine; right?</p> <p>14 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: When the control centre sends a request to</p> <p>16 dispatch officers to tackle the fire at Wang Fuk Court,</p> <p>17 what information would you receive? That is, in</p> <p>18 addition to the lines talking about the house as well as</p> <p>19 fire and scaffolding, what other information would you</p> <p>20 be given?</p> <p>21 MR HUI KIN ON: In the position of the person in charge of</p> <p>22 the vehicle, there is a mobile terminal. The mobile</p> <p>23 terminal gives information about the condition of the</p> <p>24 building, the number of floors, the size. If there are</p> <p>25 failure in the FSI, a remark will be made, and from the</p>	<p>1 information would not hamper you?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: If in advance I know about the type of FSI</p> <p>3 that's having a failure, it would help me to formulate</p> <p>4 a strategy.</p> <p>5 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: My question is were you</p> <p>6 informed but you have forgotten, or the information</p> <p>7 would not be sent from the terminal?</p> <p>8 MR HUI KIN ON: I can't remember now whether the information</p> <p>9 was there in the terminal, but definitely I was informed</p> <p>10 by the terminal that there was defective FSI.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: You've been on different operations; right?</p> <p>12 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>13 MR SW LEE: In your experience, were there similar</p> <p>14 information and from your recollection would the</p> <p>15 information contain the type of defective FSI?</p> <p>16 MR HUI KIN ON: I remember, yes, the information was</p> <p>17 available.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: You remember that is the case, but in relation</p> <p>19 to Wang Fuk Court you cannot remember whether the</p> <p>20 information was present?</p> <p>21 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>22 MR SW LEE: In view of the maintenance at Wang Fuk Court --</p> <p>23 you should know because you are from the Tai Po station.</p> <p>24 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: You knew that there was a contingency plan</p>
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<p>1 mobile terminal we can also receive information about</p> <p>2 FSI failure. We also have a map of the scene to give us</p> <p>3 a rough idea of the location of the fire. We receive</p> <p>4 the information from the mobile data terminal.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: From the information you learned that at the</p> <p>6 scene the FSI failed?</p> <p>7 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: But from the information, would you know what</p> <p>9 kind of FSI? Because it covers lighting, fire</p> <p>10 extinguishers. So from the terminal, at the time of the</p> <p>11 dispatch, would you receive information about what type</p> <p>12 of FSI was failing?</p> <p>13 MR HUI KIN ON: I remember that there was a failure in the</p> <p>14 FSI, but as to which type, I can't remember whether the</p> <p>15 information was given.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: Assuming that at that time if you were told that</p> <p>17 the booster pump was defective or there was no water in</p> <p>18 the rooftop tank, if the information could have been</p> <p>19 given to you in advance, albeit just a few minutes in</p> <p>20 advance, because you arrived at the scene in five</p> <p>21 minutes, in that few minutes, would it have helped you</p> <p>22 to formulate your firefighting strategies?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: So if you were told which installation was</p> <p>25 defective, it would help, or the absence of the</p>	<p>1 formulated in view of the maintenance project; right?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: Was the contingency plan given to you on board</p> <p>4 the vehicle or was the information available from the</p> <p>5 terminal; can you tell us?</p> <p>6 MR HUI KIN ON: There wasn't a copy of the action plan on</p> <p>7 board the engine.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: But before you were dispatched, were you aware</p> <p>9 of the content of the contingency plan?</p> <p>10 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes, I was.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: Were you involved in the formulation of the</p> <p>12 contingency plan?</p> <p>13 MR HUI KIN ON: I was involved.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: Let's look at the contingency plan. Then you</p> <p>15 tell us whether you were involved and how it was</p> <p>16 formulated. B2/2642.</p> <p>17 This is "Contingency Plan for Wang Fuk Court Under</p> <p>18 Major Maintenance Works". On page 2644, in the</p> <p>19 introduction, paragraph 1.2, there is this piece of</p> <p>20 information available, that is, roughly how many units</p> <p>21 and how many floors in each block. You were aware of</p> <p>22 the information; right?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: Prior to the formulation of the plan I believe</p> <p>25 that you and your colleagues had been to the scene for</p>

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<p>1 an inspection; right?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: When we formulated the contingency plan, we</p> <p>3 did not carry out any inspections at the scene. To us,</p> <p>4 the complex was an old one. Officers at the Tai Po</p> <p>5 station had adequate information of the complex because</p> <p>6 previously we have handled other cases at that complex,</p> <p>7 and when we were conducting familiarisation visits,</p> <p>8 we had been to the complex.</p> <p>9 So the plan contains basic information. We have set</p> <p>10 aside additional manpower in view of the major</p> <p>11 renovation.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: That is because there was a major maintenance</p> <p>13 going on. Paragraph 5 on page 2645, there is</p> <p>14 "Operational Procedure for Fire Call", that is, if there</p> <p>15 is a call for assistance from a fire, this is the</p> <p>16 procedure to be adopted; right?</p> <p>17 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: Let me give you an example. As the person in</p> <p>19 charge of the hydraulic platform, under paragraph 5.1,</p> <p>20 it says that an appraisal would be made of the situation</p> <p>21 and a decision would be made in relation to the</p> <p>22 application of firefighting or rescue measures; right?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: 5.4, 5.6 covers corresponding measures in</p> <p>25 relation to the dispatch of LRU, that is the light</p>	<p>1 it's necessary for additional support, the commander at</p> <p>2 the scene will make decision. So the contingency plan</p> <p>3 was a general contingency plan providing general</p> <p>4 information and general contingency plan in relation to</p> <p>5 the fire.</p> <p>6 MR SW LEE: So this is the minimum requirement according to</p> <p>7 you, but when circumstances change, the commander at</p> <p>8 scene can request for additional support, manpower</p> <p>9 support and support of appliances; is that right?</p> <p>10 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: If we refer to B10, we understand that at 14:56,</p> <p>12 at that time you arrived at the scene. If you look at</p> <p>13 the column 14:56:22, "ARR" means arrival at the scene</p> <p>14 and resumption of the position as a commander; right?</p> <p>15 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: Five minutes, five seconds, this is the time</p> <p>17 from when the call was first received by the FSD. In</p> <p>18 five minutes, five seconds you arrived at the scene?</p> <p>19 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: 14:57, this is the first report you made;</p> <p>21 correct?</p> <p>22 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>23 MR SW LEE: As this is a report made by you, around</p> <p>24 30 seconds upon arrival at the scene you made your</p> <p>25 report. Can you explain to us what this message means?</p>
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<p>1 rescue unit; right?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: Paragraph 5 will be triggered when a call for</p> <p>4 assistance of a fire is received; right?</p> <p>5 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>6 MR SW LEE: Of course at the scene you take into account the</p> <p>7 situation. Say, for example, at Wang Fuk Court there</p> <p>8 were many more appliances involved; right?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: In the formulation of the contingency plan, have</p> <p>11 you considered the timing of the fire as a factor? Let</p> <p>12 me give you more details.</p> <p>13 It was lucky that the fire at Wang Fuk Court</p> <p>14 happened at about 2 pm, so many people were out at</p> <p>15 school or at work. Should the fire have taken place at</p> <p>16 night, there would have been many more residents at</p> <p>17 home. So when the plan was formulated, did you take</p> <p>18 into consideration the timing of the incident and</p> <p>19 corresponding changes, say, for example, during daytime</p> <p>20 there would not be as many appliances, et cetera?</p> <p>21 MR HUI KIN ON: At the time when the plan was formulated,</p> <p>22 it's a general plan to conduct firefighting and rescue</p> <p>23 operations at that complex. Additional manpower would</p> <p>24 be deployed. At the initial stage there would be more</p> <p>25 flexibility for the incident commander to deploy. If</p>	<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: Okay. At around 14:56:22 I arrived at the</p> <p>2 scene. As mentioned in my witness statement, my vehicle</p> <p>3 was parked at the roundabout. When I alighted the</p> <p>4 vehicle, a passerby led me to the rear facade of Wang</p> <p>5 Cheong House facing Island House Lane.</p> <p>6 MR SW LEE: You talked about your vehicle being parked at</p> <p>7 the roundabout. Maybe I show you a clip. You tell me</p> <p>8 if this is the vehicle you arrived with.</p> <p>9 This is the roundabout at Island House Lane you were</p> <p>10 talking about; right?</p> <p>11 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: Along the lane, over the left-hand side, this is</p> <p>13 the turntable ladder that you arrived at the scene with?</p> <p>14 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: Let's look at the clip.</p> <p>16 (Video played)</p> <p>17 VIDEO RECORDING: There is a fire at Wang Cheong House.</p> <p>18 There is so much smoke. My home is blocked with smoke.</p> <p>19 My home is on fire.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: Here we see your colleagues arriving at the</p> <p>21 scene.</p> <p>22 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>23 VIDEO RECORDING: Fire everywhere. 10th floor is on fire.</p> <p>24 I'm going to work.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: In the video clip we see smoke coming from</p>

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<p>1 a building. That should be Wang Cheong House; am</p> <p>2 I correct?</p> <p>3 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: You said that upon arrival at the scene there</p> <p>5 was a resident of the court taking you to where the fire</p> <p>6 broke out; right?</p> <p>7 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: When or after you received the message, was</p> <p>9 there constant communication between you and the control</p> <p>10 centre telling you which floor of the building was on</p> <p>11 fire?</p> <p>12 MR HUI KIN ON: No. I learned that the facade of Wang</p> <p>13 Cheong House was on fire, the scaffolding there was on</p> <p>14 fire.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: In the video clip we learned that upon arrival</p> <p>16 of your fire appliance, the sound of the appliance was</p> <p>17 on. Did you turn off or was the alarm of the fire</p> <p>18 appliance turned off at a certain point in time?</p> <p>19 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: We've read the documents provided by the Fire</p> <p>21 Services Department saying that, unless absolutely</p> <p>22 necessary, only the light of the appliance should be</p> <p>23 done and alarm should not sound. Why is there such</p> <p>24 a requirement?</p> <p>25 MR HUI KIN ON: When the fire appliance arrived at Wang Fuk</p>	<p>1 there was weak signals with the devices?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: I've not come across the situation. Mostly</p> <p>3 the mobile communication device would work normally.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: We knew that you arrived at the scene. I'd like</p> <p>5 to take you to another photo taken by a passerby of the</p> <p>6 cycling track near Wang Cheong House.</p> <p>7 I believe a passerby brought you to this rear facade</p> <p>8 of Wang Cheong House; correct?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: Let's watch the clip very quickly.</p> <p>11 (Video played)</p> <p>12 VIDEO RECORDING: The fire spread to the 4th floor. I had</p> <p>13 no idea. Quickly evacuate! There is fire! The FSD is</p> <p>14 here. We have firefighters here.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: I believe that one of them was you and the</p> <p>16 others were your crew members?</p> <p>17 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: Let's continue watching the clip before I put</p> <p>19 more questions.</p> <p>20 (Video played)</p> <p>21 VIDEO RECORDING: The fire has spread to the 8th floor! We</p> <p>22 should leave. We need to leave. Let's step back. We</p> <p>23 got to go. We've got a big issue! We've got a big</p> <p>24 problem! Be careful! We need to step back. There is</p> <p>25 so much fire at the rear entrance. Leave immediately!</p>
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<p>1 Court, we had the light signals and alarm on. As the</p> <p>2 fire appliance was parked, we turned off the alarm. As</p> <p>3 far as I understand, the decibel of the alarm is high.</p> <p>4 If we have a few fire appliances there, the mobile</p> <p>5 communication signals would be affected; the sound of</p> <p>6 the alarm was too loud, the communication between</p> <p>7 firefighters at scene may be undermined. At the same</p> <p>8 time, we don't want the siren to affect other residents.</p> <p>9 So, in general, when we've parked our appliance,</p> <p>10 when we were planning for our strategy, we turn the</p> <p>11 siren off.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: You said that you didn't want to interfere with</p> <p>13 the communication systems. When you and your crew</p> <p>14 members were dispatched to the scene, apart from talking</p> <p>15 face to face, when you were at different locations and</p> <p>16 when you needed to communicate with each other, can you</p> <p>17 briefly explain to us what the communication systems is</p> <p>18 that you use?</p> <p>19 MR HUI KIN ON: We all have a mobile communication device</p> <p>20 with us.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: I believe that's a digitalised device?</p> <p>22 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>23 MR SW LEE: When you arrive at a very serious fire, have you</p> <p>24 come across cases where you could not make use of the</p> <p>25 radio communication device or was there any cases where</p>	<p>1 Run! Run! The scaffolding is falling down!</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: At 14:57 we read the message you reported to the</p> <p>3 control centre. I believe that you made the report</p> <p>4 after arriving at the scene and looking at the scenario;</p> <p>5 right?</p> <p>6 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: From the clip, we understand that there were</p> <p>8 miscellaneous articles, bamboo sticks collapsing; right?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: I know that this is the rear facade of Wang</p> <p>11 Cheong House. This is not the main entrance. This is</p> <p>12 where the rear staircase was. Do you know what the</p> <p>13 entrance and exit situation was like?</p> <p>14 MR HUI KIN ON: When I arrived at this location and I looked</p> <p>15 at the situation, and -- I know that this is where the</p> <p>16 rear entrance was. At that time, there was a huge fire</p> <p>17 there and there was objects falling down on to the</p> <p>18 ground and it was difficult for anyone to use the rear</p> <p>19 entrance and exit to gain access or leave the building.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: Now I'd like to focus on what you've told us.</p> <p>21 I know that you are the most senior officer at the</p> <p>22 scene.</p> <p>23 You were the most senior frontline officer at the</p> <p>24 scene, so naturally you became the instant commander at</p> <p>25 the scene; correct?</p>

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<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: Can you let us know what instructions you've</p> <p>3 given to your crew members after assessing the</p> <p>4 situation?</p> <p>5 MR HUI KIN ON: When we were at the fire, I asked the crew</p> <p>6 members to start using a hose to suppress the fire --</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: Please pause here. Where did you deploy the</p> <p>8 hose to suppress the fire?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: We immediately used a hose reel from the</p> <p>10 Tai Po hydraulic platform to suppress the fire at the</p> <p>11 lower floors of Wang Cheong House.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: So you needed to pull a hose from the roundabout</p> <p>13 to Wang Cheong House to suppress the fire?</p> <p>14 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: And that's the coverage that you deployed?</p> <p>16 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>17 MR SW LEE: When you gave your instructions do you know how</p> <p>18 many of your colleagues or firefighters were there at</p> <p>19 the scene?</p> <p>20 MR HUI KIN ON: In accordance with the deployment scale of</p> <p>21 alarm No. 1 fire, I knew that the rescue team was on</p> <p>22 their way and, because the FSI was defective, extra fire</p> <p>23 appliances were deployed. After the incident, I knew</p> <p>24 that about 12 fire appliances were dispatched.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: You arrived at the scene at 14:56. At 14:57 you</p>	<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: Agreed.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: I'd like to refer you to a Fire Services</p> <p>3 Department policy instructions at page 2186. I believe</p> <p>4 that you have read this document; am I right? Are you</p> <p>5 familiar with this?</p> <p>6 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes, I've seen this.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: This is some sort of general order. I'd like to</p> <p>8 refer you to paragraph 3.1.2. What this paragraph means</p> <p>9 essentially is that upon discovery of major defects of</p> <p>10 major FSIs, in paragraph (a) it seems that first the</p> <p>11 Fire Services Control Centre should create a shutdown</p> <p>12 record in the computerised mobilising system.</p> <p>13 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: I believe that's the mobile data terminal that</p> <p>15 you are referring to. You should be able to learn of</p> <p>16 the defect on the terminal. That's why in the document,</p> <p>17 in the incident occurrence we see a message of defective</p> <p>18 FSI?</p> <p>19 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: When an FSI is defined to have major defects,</p> <p>21 then you need to send another major pump to the scene;</p> <p>22 am I right?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: We need to dispatch another pump station.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: MP, is that major pump?</p> <p>25 MR HUI KIN ON: That's the pump station that we were</p>
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<p>1 made a report. After making the report, I believe that</p> <p>2 you immediately had to give instructions to your crew</p> <p>3 members for the rescue operation.</p> <p>4 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: I wonder if you had clear information on exactly</p> <p>6 how many colleagues, how many fire appliances were at</p> <p>7 the scene to assist you; were you fed such information</p> <p>8 constantly?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. When the fire appliance arrived at the</p> <p>10 scene, the commander of the appliance would report to</p> <p>11 me, saying that they have arrived.</p> <p>12 At 14:56 I was the first responder there. I made</p> <p>13 deployment and gave instructions at the main entrance of</p> <p>14 Wang Cheong House. After that, I saw more colleagues</p> <p>15 and fire appliances arriving. The commanders of the</p> <p>16 fire appliances reported to me and then I would give</p> <p>17 them instructions.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: We understand that when firefighters arrive at</p> <p>19 the scene they do have a list of goals. The first goal</p> <p>20 of a firefighter at a scene would be to save people;</p> <p>21 right?</p> <p>22 MR HUI KIN ON: We want to put out fire and save people.</p> <p>23 MR SW LEE: But between putting out a fire and saving</p> <p>24 people, I believe that you would prioritise life-saving;</p> <p>25 am I right?</p>	<p>1 referring to.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: So as long as -- or when the FSCC knows that</p> <p>3 there was a defective FSI at scene, they need to</p> <p>4 dispatch one additional major pump to the scene?</p> <p>5 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>6 MR SW LEE: But that's not up to the incident commander at</p> <p>7 scene, because the FSCC is the one to make arrangement</p> <p>8 for the additional major pump?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: Just now I interrupted your speech. When you</p> <p>11 and your colleagues arrived at the scene, apart from</p> <p>12 suppressing the fire from spreading as far as possible,</p> <p>13 what other instructions had you given to your crew</p> <p>14 members?</p> <p>15 MR HUI KIN ON: At that time at the Island House Lane, after</p> <p>16 I learned of the situation, I asked colleagues of the</p> <p>17 hydraulic platform to turn on the hose. I deployed two</p> <p>18 jets to suppress the fire at Island House Lane and I in</p> <p>19 person went to the main entrance of Wang Cheong House.</p> <p>20 When I looked up, I saw dense smoke and the smoke</p> <p>21 was coming out from the rooftop of Wang Cheong House.</p> <p>22 In a very short period of time, I saw fire and smoke</p> <p>23 spreading along the rear side of Wang Cheong House to</p> <p>24 the front side of Wang Cheong House. I saw burning</p> <p>25 miscellaneous materials, bamboo sticks, scaffolding</p>

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<p>1 structures cascading onto the ground. Many of them</p> <p>2 collapsed at a very rapid speed. All of a sudden the</p> <p>3 main entrance of Wang Cheong House caught on fire.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: When you arrived at the scene, there was</p> <p>5 a resident who led you to the rear side of Wang Cheong</p> <p>6 House. That was believed to be where the fire first</p> <p>7 broke out, that was the source of the fire. You said</p> <p>8 that when the fire appliance arrived at the scene, the</p> <p>9 siren would be on and it would only be turned off after</p> <p>10 a certain time. Was there any staff from the property</p> <p>11 management office reaching out to you, explaining to you</p> <p>12 about the situation at the scene? Did that happen?</p> <p>13 MR HUI KIN ON: At the time, no one from the property</p> <p>14 management company approached me.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: No one from the PMC told you they were from the</p> <p>16 company? No one approached you?</p> <p>17 MR HUI KIN ON: No.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: There was objective evidence showing that at</p> <p>19 that time one of the FS installations was switched off</p> <p>20 and that was the fire alarm system. I want to confirm</p> <p>21 with you that when you were at Wang Cheong House, did</p> <p>22 you hear any fire alarm?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: No.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: When you were at Wang Cheong House, did you ask</p> <p>25 your crew members to help evacuate the residents or try</p>	<p>1 who escaped from different places and brought them to</p> <p>2 a safe place, and we took this action as well. We</p> <p>3 offered assistance to residents who escaped from</p> <p>4 different places and brought them to a safe place.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: You said there were residents escaping from</p> <p>6 different places. You meant there were residents from</p> <p>7 Wang Cheong House as well as other blocks?</p> <p>8 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. I saw these residents from where I was</p> <p>9 standing.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: Don't mind me asking. We know that in this</p> <p>11 incident it seems that the fire alarm system played</p> <p>12 a rather important role. The fire alarm did not sound,</p> <p>13 and so residents did not know that they had to escape.</p> <p>14 So I want to know, the FSD, when formulating strategies</p> <p>15 or response plans, I understand that sometimes you may</p> <p>16 be deployed to the scene and the fire alarm system is</p> <p>17 not in operation; is that right?</p> <p>18 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>19 MR SW LEE: In situations like these, I'm talking about</p> <p>20 general situations like these, are there any established</p> <p>21 plans telling you what to do to direct residents to</p> <p>22 leave?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: Not clearly written down.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: So we have to rely on you as well as the crew</p> <p>25 members on the scene?</p>
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<p>1 to learn about the situation inside the building?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: When I got off the fire appliance, I saw the</p> <p>3 situation and I deployed fire hoses and asked to apply</p> <p>4 water jets. I did not hear any fire alarm. I tried to</p> <p>5 ask my colleagues to get in to the building to see why</p> <p>6 there was no fire alarm. A lot of times we were the</p> <p>7 ones who activate the fire alarm system. At the rear</p> <p>8 entrance of Wang Cheong House, we couldn't get in, and</p> <p>9 when we went to the front entrance there were many</p> <p>10 burning debris falling from height. The situation</p> <p>11 deteriorated very quickly. We couldn't get in from the</p> <p>12 front entrance so we couldn't get into Wang Cheong House</p> <p>13 to activate the fire alarm system.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: When you say activating the fire alarm system,</p> <p>15 do you mean you would break the break-glass alarm to</p> <p>16 activate the system?</p> <p>17 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: You said you couldn't activate the fire alarm</p> <p>19 system. At that time, according to your knowledge, were</p> <p>20 there any policies or instructions for you telling you</p> <p>21 what to do when faced with such a situation?</p> <p>22 MR HUI KIN ON: At that time when we were at the scene, we</p> <p>23 worked with the police officers. The police officers</p> <p>24 helped us evacuate the residents. On the scene there</p> <p>25 were police officers helping us to evacuate residents</p>	<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: According to the situation on the scene, we</p> <p>2 make deployment or we take corresponding actions.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: If there are more instructions for firefighters,</p> <p>4 with respect to guidelines, I believe it could be more</p> <p>5 helpful to the frontline officers. Do you agree?</p> <p>6 MR HUI KIN ON: Agree.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: There should be an amplifier on each fire</p> <p>8 appliance. Again, this is not a criticism. I just want</p> <p>9 to know if this would be a feasible plan. Would it be</p> <p>10 possible for you to make use of the amplifiers on the</p> <p>11 fire appliances to make announcements, telling residents</p> <p>12 to leave?</p> <p>13 MR HUI KIN ON: As you said, this is one of the tools. On</p> <p>14 that day when we saw the fire was in such a big scale,</p> <p>15 I immediately deployed fire hoses. And with the support</p> <p>16 of the fire appliances as well as the manpower at the</p> <p>17 scene, I mainly deployed hoses and made use of the water</p> <p>18 pipes on the street, and the fire spread very quickly</p> <p>19 within a short period of time. I had not encountered</p> <p>20 such situation before. At that time, it was very noisy.</p> <p>21 The noise was from the burning bamboo sticks and</p> <p>22 scaffolding. There were also debris falling from</p> <p>23 height. So it affected the functions of the amplifier.</p> <p>24 A lot of manpower was deployed to put out the fire.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: You said you had to ensure that you and your</p>

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<p>1 crew members would not be affected in terms of your 2 communication; right? 3 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. But the amplifiers couldn't function 4 very well. 5 MR SW LEE: We understand at 15:02, that is about 6 six minutes after the fire broke out -- B10, page 5090, 7 we understand that 10 minutes after the fire broke out 8 you upgraded the fire to a No. 3 alarm; is that right? 9 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 10 MR SW LEE: We would look at some guidelines from the FSD 11 with you later. I want to know at that time, did you, 12 based on the situation at the scene, decide to upgrade 13 the fire to a No. 3 alarm? 14 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. At around 15:02 I saw that at 15 Wang Cheong House and also the facades of various blocks 16 at Wang Fuk Court the fire was spreading and the blocks 17 were surrounded by fire and smoke and there were signs 18 showing that the fire would continue to spread. At the 19 front entrance as well as the rear exit of Wang Cheong 20 House, there were debris falling from height and so 21 people couldn't get in and out properly. I expected 22 that a lot of residents were waiting for us to rescue. 23 With the existing manpower, we couldn't finish the 24 operation so I upgraded the fire to No. 3 alarm. 25 MR SW LEE: Bundle B2, page 2088. It seems that there are</p>	<p>1 could not be dealt with by the initial attendance, then 2 the fire should be upgraded to No. 3; is that right? 3 MR HUI KIN ON: When the manpower and resources available 4 could not put the fire under control, then the fire 5 should be upgraded. So I agree. 6 MR SW LEE: You were the commander at the scene. As far as 7 you understood, with the resources and manpower 8 available at the scene, you were of the view that the 9 deployment available could not deal with the fire; 10 correct? 11 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 12 MR SW LEE: So you upgraded it to No. 3. There are also 13 No. 4 and No. 5 alarm fires. If you look at page 2089, 14 (ix), there is "Disaster Alarm"? 15 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 16 MR SW LEE: The Wang Fuk Court fire did not reach this scale 17 of disaster alarm? 18 MR HUI KIN ON: No. 19 MR SW LEE: Another document I'd like you to look at is at 20 bundle B9, page 4853. These are the guidelines on 21 upgrading fire alarms, that is under what circumstances 22 you should upgrade a fire alarm. 23 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 24 MR SW LEE: I believe you are familiar with this document; 25 right?</p>
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<p>1 guidelines telling firefighters when to upgrade a fire. 2 When you were dispatched to the scene, Wang Fuk Court 3 was under No. 1 alarm fire; correct? 4 MR HUI KIN ON: Correct. 5 MR SW LEE: So on the top of page 2088 it says "No. 1 Alarm 6 Fire". I understand that there was no announcement of 7 No. 2 alarm fire at Wang Fuk Court. It jumped to No. 3 8 alarm fire. So when the control centre made the first 9 announcement of whether it should be No. 1 or No. 2 10 alarm fire, if you look at subparagraph (c), it says if 11 there is restricted water supply, then there should be 12 a No. 2 alarm fire right away. 13 According to your knowledge, what does it mean by 14 "restricted water supply" here? 15 MR HUI KIN ON: "Category C: Restricted Water Supply" on 16 this document refers to situations in remote or rural 17 areas. The water supply systems may be far away from 18 the water supply on the street, so if there is 19 restricted water supply, we would define it as 20 category C under No. 2 alarm fire. 21 MR SW LEE: On that day, when you were dispatched to the 22 scene, there was a No. 1 alarm fire and you noticed that 23 the fire was spreading so you decided to upgrade it to 24 a No. 3 alarm fire. If you continue to look at 25 page 2088 of this document, it says that if the fire</p>	<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 2 MR SW LEE: Page 4858 of this document shows that, under 3 3.1.1, first priority should always be given to rescue, 4 ie saving of life. That's why I asked you just now, it 5 seems like the first priority of firefighters is to 6 rescue people. 7 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. 8 MR SW LEE: If you look at the next paragraph, I understand 9 "IC" refers to "incident commander", that is the duty 10 you had at the scene? 11 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. 12 MR SW LEE: It says here, if you look at the last bit of 13 this paragraph: 14 "Therefore, unless the IC has fully appraised the 15 size and location of the fire, and is confident that the 16 fire can be contained within a short period of time to 17 eliminate the risks to occupants ... the fire should be 18 upgraded immediately." 19 So this serves as a guideline, telling you under 20 what circumstances you need to upgrade a fire alarm; 21 right? 22 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 23 MR SW LEE: In the Wang Fuk Court fire, you were in the 24 commander post for about 30 minutes; right? 25 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes, around that time.</p>

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<p>1 MR SW LEE: Then at 15:04, the station commander arrived. 2 At 15:19 he officially took over? 3 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 4 MR SW LEE: So at 15:04 he arrived -- I mean he received the 5 call to arrive at the scene and then he arrived and he 6 took over at 15:19; correct? 7 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 8 MR SW LEE: I want to learn more about the situation at that 9 time. At 14:57 you made observations and you made 10 arrangements for your colleagues to try to get the fire 11 under control. According to your witness statement, at 12 about 3 pm, you noticed that a part at Wang Cheong House 13 as well as at the open ground near Wang Cheong House, it 14 looked like the ground floor or the lower floors of 15 Wang Tai House was also on fire. 16 MR HUI KIN ON: I noticed that at Wang Tai House there were 17 some sparks. 18 MR SW LEE: Did you see the fire at Wang Tai House yourself 19 or were there colleagues at the scene who reported the 20 situation to you? 21 MR HUI KIN ON: I saw it myself. 22 MR SW LEE: We know that Wang Fuk Court consists of eight 23 blocks. It's a rather big housing estate. You were the 24 incident commander at the scene so you had to know the 25 situation at the scene; right?</p>	<p>1 or arrangement-making? 2 MR HUI KIN ON: I agree. 3 MR SW LEE: Perhaps this will be for someone in a more 4 senior position to consider, that is, the improvement 5 measures. 6 Now we move on to a sad topic. It's about your 7 colleague, Mr Ho. Let me give you some background 8 information. I think that, at the scene, the control 9 centre received two or three calls for assistance. 10 There is one, Wang Cheong, 2107 unit, and also another 11 one from 2703 and also unit 802. In what way did the 12 communication centre tell you about these assistance 13 calls? 14 MR HUI KIN ON: From the radio telephone. 15 MR SW LEE: So someone called to the control centre, say 16 through 999, and then the communications centre, that is 17 the control centre, sent the information to you via 18 radio communication? 19 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. 20 MR SW LEE: You were the incident commander. You had to 21 oversee a number of things. In addition to deployment 22 at the scene, you also have to rely on yourself to 23 receive the information instead of relying on someone 24 else to pass you the information. 25 MR HUI KIN ON: There was a rescue team at that time. The</p>
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<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 2 MR SW LEE: So I want to learn about the strategies for 3 putting out the fire. When you arrived at the scene, in 4 terms of the manpower, were you able to dispatch a few 5 colleagues to not necessarily conduct rescue operation, 6 but to make observations? You noticed that the fire at 7 Wang Tai House was spreading. In terms of the manpower, 8 were you able to dispatch colleagues to serve as 9 observers to observe the fire? 10 MR HUI KIN ON: Generally, in No. 1 alarm fires there would 11 be room for us to do this. However, on the 26th at 12 Wang Fuk Court, the fire was huge and I had not dealt 13 with such fires before. At the scene there was a large 14 area that was affected by the fire with the manpower and 15 resources available. They all had their own tasks. 16 MR SW LEE: So there was no way for you to dispatch 17 colleagues to observe the situation and report it to 18 you? 19 MR HUI KIN ON: Not at that time. 20 MR SW LEE: We'd like to reflect on the incident to see if 21 we could do better. For fires at large-scale housing 22 estates, if you are the incident commander and if there 23 are observers at the scene and if there is technology 24 available, for example, if drones could be dispatched, 25 do you think it would help you with manpower deployment</p>	<p>1 rescue team is a dedicated team to handle calls for 2 assistance. At about 15:03, the rescue team was on 3 their way -- either on their way or just arrived. So in 4 addition to firefighting, I also had to take care of 5 calls for assistance. 6 MR SW LEE: You were the incident commander. So even with 7 the arrival of the rescue team, you would be the one to 8 direct the rescue team where to carry out the 9 operations; right? 10 MR HUI KIN ON: There is an officer serving as the leader of 11 the rescue team. The team leader has the power to send 12 a breathing apparatus unit to handle these cases. Of 13 course there will be constant communication with the 14 general or main command at the scene. 15 MR SW LEE: That of course involved communications with you 16 in relation to firefighting; right? 17 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. 18 MR SW LEE: In relation to the instructions given to fireman 19 Mr Ho, Mr Ho Wai Ho, it was you who gave the 20 instructions to send a rescue team to Wang Cheong House? 21 Was it you who gave the instruction? 22 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 23 MR SW LEE: You used the radio telephone to send the 24 information in relation to your instructions; right? 25 MR HUI KIN ON: In general, yes. However, at that time, the</p>

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1 team leader, the station officer was right next to me,
 2 so I just gave the instructions in person.
 3 MR SW LEE: You told us just now that Wang Fuk Court was a
 4 sizeable complex involving eight blocks. In addition,
 5 it was undergoing renovation. We understand that it was
 6 difficult to identify individual blocks. Did you have
 7 that impression?
 8 MR HUI KIN ON: I was aware of which block was which, but
 9 I agree that during the major renovation the blocks were
 10 covered in nets so there was a chance that might be the
 11 case, but I knew.
 12 MR SW LEE: You worked in the Tai Po Fire Station, as you
 13 said; you know quite well about this old residential
 14 complex. Sometimes officers were dispatched from other
 15 fire stations. We know that in this instance there were
 16 appliances from Ma On Shan, from Shatin, as well as from
 17 Hong Kong Island to help in Wang Fuk Court; right?
 18 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.
 19 MR SW LEE: So again, this is a review after the incident.
 20 If there were resources or guidelines to the police or
 21 the FSD to put up signage at suitable places, then your
 22 officers would be able to tell which block is which. Do
 23 you think this will help when it comes to operations at
 24 the scene?
 25 MR HUI KIN ON: You mean to erect signage at the scene?

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1 MR SW LEE: Perhaps just a signage or post, et cetera.
 2 MR HUI KIN ON: To do it immediately at the scene?
 3 I understand that there were mobile command units being
 4 sent. There were also incident commanders. They were
 5 making deployments and arrangements from these units.
 6 I think that they knew that which block was which.
 7 MR SW LEE: But I am talking about at the scene, when
 8 frontline officers have to go into individual blocks to
 9 carry out firefighting or rescue operations. I went to
 10 the scene twice. If you gave me just a map, I was not
 11 able to differentiate the different blocks. If there
 12 were plans put in place, then officers from other fire
 13 stations would know where to go if you directed them to
 14 go to, say, block A. Do you think it's worth
 15 considering that in the future; in relation to large
 16 complexes this may be a possible approach?
 17 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Perhaps be more specific
 18 because, at the time of the firefighting operation, it's
 19 impossible to put up retractable banners or signage.
 20 We understand that, unfortunately, firefighter Mr Ho
 21 went to Wang Tai House instead of Wang Cheong House.
 22 It's sometimes inevitable that mistakes are made when
 23 different officers from a different district is sent.
 24 Are there any ways to avoid this?
 25 MR HUI KIN ON: At the beginning, we have already put in

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1 place a contingency plan at our fire station. There are
 2 layouts pointing out the names and location of
 3 individual blocks. We disseminate the information to
 4 the other fire stations of different districts. They
 5 are aware of this practice in their training or
 6 briefing. The information is also disseminated to the
 7 appliances. Like the counsel said, if there were more
 8 resources or tools to put up signage at individual
 9 buildings, of course with more resources that would be
 10 better. I do agree with that.
 11 MR SW LEE: Mr Ho Wai Ho went to a wrong building because,
 12 as evidence suggests -- one of the reasons that he made
 13 the mistake was he stopped to help someone in
 14 a wheelchair, so he lost sight of his team members and
 15 then went to a wrong block.
 16 When he went to carry out a rescue operation, should
 17 there be an entry control officer?
 18 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.
 19 MR SW LEE: The purpose of the officer is to record the
 20 attendance, the entrance of each firefighter; right?
 21 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.
 22 MR SW LEE: In addition, there is also the BA, breathing
 23 apparatus. It has a time limit for its use; right?
 24 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.
 25 MR SW LEE: So the entry control officer is also in charge

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1 of monitoring the time left of individual breathing
 2 apparatus, say, for example, if the officer was going to
 3 run out of oxygen, then that officer would be asked to
 4 leave the scene; right?
 5 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.
 6 MR SW LEE: It seems that at the time of entry, there was no
 7 record that Mr Ho Wai Ho entered the scene. Do you know
 8 why?
 9 MR HUI KIN ON: At the initial stage of the fire, the entry
 10 control officer was yet to be arranged. When the call
 11 was received from 2701, unless there are instructions
 12 from the main commander of the breathing apparatus unit,
 13 it would be the officer in charge of the rescue
 14 appliance to set up the post. We were blocked from
 15 entering. There was a firefighting operation being
 16 conducted at the periphery of the complex, trying to
 17 gain entry. So at that time we could not gain entry and
 18 we could not set up this entry control officer post.
 19 MR SW LEE: But according to your instruction, he was to
 20 carry out rescue operation from 2701.
 21 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.
 22 MR SW LEE: But at that time there was no entry control
 23 officer posted at the block to monitor or record entry?
 24 MR HUI KIN ON: When the rescue team entered the scene to
 25 handle the rescue case, the post had yet to be set up

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<p>1 because they could not gain entry into Wang Cheong 2 House. 3 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So there was none for 4 Wang Tai House because the rescue operation had yet to 5 begin at Wang Tai House; right? 6 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. 7 MR SW LEE: We understand that Mr Ho Wai Ho went to Wang Tai 8 House and went up to the 30th floor. So the only person 9 who entered the building to carry out the mission was 10 Mr Ho Wai Ho because, according to you, no firefighter 11 could gain entry at Wang Cheong House. 12 MR HUI KIN ON: I agree. That's my understanding. 13 MR SW LEE: At 15:19, the station commander of Tai Po Fire 14 Station arrived at the scene, and you gave him a report. 15 It was a report covering a number of issues, one of 16 which was about the mayday call from Mr Ho Wai Ho; 17 right? 18 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 19 MR SW LEE: Mr Cheung might have taken over as incident 20 commander, but you were in charge of the rescue mission 21 of your colleague; right? 22 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. 23 MR SW LEE: Were you in charge of the rescue mission? 24 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 25 MR SW LEE: In relation to this rescue operation, can you</p>	<p>1 MR SW LEE: In addition to you, how many other colleagues 2 were there in the rescue operation? 3 MR HUI KIN ON: There were about five to six crews working 4 in the rescue operation. We were all aware of the 5 information. Some officers were being assigned to the 6 emergency response team and there are also firefighters 7 trying to put out the fire at the entrance of Wang 8 Cheong House. 9 MR SW LEE: So how many people were there in the rescue 10 mission, regardless of their posts or teams? 11 MR HUI KIN ON: A dozen, two dozen. 12 MR SW LEE: Before the break I'd like to ask you this 13 question. At that time, he could not tell where he was. 14 You did not expect that someone could gain entry into 15 any of the blocks. So in relation to trying to locate 16 him, did you give any instructions? What actions did 17 you take to try to locate him? 18 MR HUI KIN ON: I tried to reply to him, trying to identify 19 the officer, send them a mayday message, but there was 20 no reply. As a result, I did what I did to try to 21 rescue him. 22 MR SW LEE: Please don't be offended. You had no idea as to 23 where to find him because there are seven other blocks 24 as well. 25 MR HUI KIN ON: I agree.</p>
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<p>1 tell us what you did and what instructions you gave? 2 MR HUI KIN ON: When I learned from the radio of this call 3 for assistance or assistance case, I did not know much 4 about the identity. I only knew that he was trapped on 5 the 30th floor of an unknown block and at that time the 6 fire was most fierce at Wang Cheong House. It was 7 swarmed in smoke. So I thought that it was very likely 8 that he was in Wang Cheong House. I formed four 9 emergency response team. Later, there was the fifth one 10 being formed. They were getting ready to enter the 11 building to deal with this mayday message. But at that 12 time, because of the fierceness of the fire at Wang 13 Cheong House, because of falling bamboo sticks, they 14 could not gain entry. At that time, they were trying to 15 fight the fire, to breach the fire to get in. 16 MR SW LEE: When you received a mayday message from 17 Mr Ho Wai Ho saying that he was on the 30th floor, were 18 you surprised? Because you were the incident commander 19 and the information you had was that there should not be 20 any firefighter inside because no one could gain entry 21 in Wang Cheong or any other blocks. At that moment, 22 were you surprised that he was inside the building? 23 MR HUI KIN ON: I was surprised because the fire was fierce 24 and within such a short time he went up to such a high 25 floor.</p>	<p>1 MR SW LEE: I will move on to a different topic. Perhaps 2 this is a good time. 3 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Will a 10-minute break be 4 enough? We will break for 10 minutes. 5 (11.19 am) 6 (A short adjournment) 7 (11.29 am) 8 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Please proceed. 9 MR SW LEE: Mr Hui, we know that at 15:02 you upgraded the 10 fire to fire alarm No. 3. We've heard from you saying 11 that you did not have experience in handling fire of 12 such a scale or similar to the scale of fire that 13 happened at Wang Fuk Court. 14 In the following questions, I'd like us to review on 15 the actions we have done to see if there is any room for 16 improvement in the future. 17 At 14:57 you described the fire at Wang Cheong House 18 as fierce and the fire went up to the 8th or 9th floor. 19 Now, looking back, should you have upgraded the fire 20 immediately to fire alarm No. 3? 21 MR HUI KIN ON: At 14:56 I arrived at the scene. Within one 22 minute, I appraised the scenario and I made some 23 deployment. Six minutes after arrival on the scene 24 I upgraded the fire to alarm No. 3 at 15:02. If I had 25 known of the consequences, then upon alighting the</p>

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<p>1 vehicle, I would have upgraded the fire immediately.</p> <p>2 The sooner the better.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: We've just looked at some guidelines and</p> <p>4 documents: if there is no way for you to handle the</p> <p>5 fire, you need to upgrade the fire. As the frontline</p> <p>6 officer, the commander at the scene, is this guideline</p> <p>7 of help to you? Should there have been more concrete</p> <p>8 guidelines to assist you in making the decision?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: I think that the guidelines have helped me</p> <p>10 in making a judgment at the scene in accordance with the</p> <p>11 actual circumstances. It says in the guidelines that if</p> <p>12 the fire cannot be effectively dealt with, the commander</p> <p>13 at the scene can upgrade the fire alarm, and I think</p> <p>14 that the flexibility has been reserved for the commander</p> <p>15 at the scene to make their own judgment call.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: If you cannot deal with the fire, you can</p> <p>17 upgrade the fire. In the course of your daily work or</p> <p>18 in your training, have you been given other form of</p> <p>19 guidelines, what factors you have to take into</p> <p>20 consideration before deciding whether or not to upgrade</p> <p>21 the fire, or is there just this line: if the fire cannot</p> <p>22 be effectively dealt with, upgrade the fire?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: At the induction training and at the</p> <p>24 guidelines that we've looked at, I understand that we</p> <p>25 have to appraise the actual situation at the scene. We</p>	<p>1 was fierce there and there was fire at the main entrance</p> <p>2 of Wang Cheong House as well. I focused my resources on</p> <p>3 firefighting and I noticed FSD members and police</p> <p>4 evacuating residents from other blocks. Those residents</p> <p>5 have been brought to a safe place.</p> <p>6 MR SW LEE: Some residents may have come down to watch the</p> <p>7 fire, but we know that the FAS of Wang Tai House was not</p> <p>8 in order. At this time, did you send anyone in there to</p> <p>9 turn on the FAS to evacuate the residents? I'm talking</p> <p>10 about Wang Tai House.</p> <p>11 MR HUI KIN ON: At that time, when I saw the fire spreading,</p> <p>12 I asked the crew members to turn on the fire alarm</p> <p>13 system of other blocks. There were crew members who</p> <p>14 have entered Wang Kin, Wang Sun and Wang Tao House to</p> <p>15 break the break-glass unit to turn on the fire alarm</p> <p>16 system, but in vein. At that time I realised that the</p> <p>17 FAS of Wang Fuk Court was problematic.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: At what time did you learn that the FAS was not</p> <p>19 in order?</p> <p>20 MR HUI KIN ON: At around 3.35, 3.40 pm.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: By 3.40 pm you mean when Mr Cheung became the</p> <p>22 incident commander; right?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: According to your understanding, has this been</p> <p>25 reported to Commander Cheung that it seems that the FAS</p>
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<p>1 have to look at the manpower, the fire appliances we</p> <p>2 have and the resources at scene. We have to consider</p> <p>3 the actual circumstances.</p> <p>4 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: You need time to observe the</p> <p>5 environment before making the decision. You cannot</p> <p>6 upgrade the fire immediately upon alighting the vehicle;</p> <p>7 right?</p> <p>8 MR HUI KIN ON: Agreed.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: We know that there is an important guideline in</p> <p>10 the document which says: if in doubt, upgrade the fire.</p> <p>11 So it's always better to upgrade than not, if you are in</p> <p>12 doubt. Is that right?</p> <p>13 MR HUI KIN ON: Agreed.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: You said earlier that you realised that other</p> <p>15 blocks caught on fire at a very early stage. Now,</p> <p>16 looking back, do you think that you should have</p> <p>17 evacuated the residents earlier?</p> <p>18 MR HUI KIN ON: If we look back, of course, it would be</p> <p>19 better if we have evacuated the residents earlier.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: You said that apart from Wang Cheong, Wang Tai</p> <p>21 caught on fire. At that point in time, why did you not</p> <p>22 evacuate the residents of Wang Tai House?</p> <p>23 MR HUI KIN ON: At 15:00 I saw flames at the scaffolding</p> <p>24 nets of Wang Tai House. I wanted to focus my resources</p> <p>25 on the fire at the Wang Cheong House because the fire</p>	<p>1 of many buildings were not in order?</p> <p>2 MR HUI KIN ON: I don't remember, but he should have</p> <p>3 realised it.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: I'd like to talk to you about the water</p> <p>5 pressure. It seems that evidence has shown that upon</p> <p>6 arrival at the scene the water pressure of the hose reel</p> <p>7 system was insufficient.</p> <p>8 MR HUI KIN ON: I've not heard of it.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: I know that at the flat roof of each block there</p> <p>10 is an FS tank. Does it matter to you in terms of</p> <p>11 firefighting works if there is water at the FS tank?</p> <p>12 MR HUI KIN ON: If there is any impact or if we did not use</p> <p>13 the fire hydrant/hose reel system then there would not</p> <p>14 be any impact because we rely on the pump of the fire</p> <p>15 appliance to add pressure to the water to put out fire.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: If you are to enter the fire scene to put out</p> <p>17 fire, very often you need to make use of the water</p> <p>18 supply system of the fire hydrant; right?</p> <p>19 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: I know that there are two sources of water.</p> <p>21 First, from the street fire hydrant, you add water to it</p> <p>22 and supply water to the building. The other source of</p> <p>23 water come from the FS tank at the flat roof. If there</p> <p>24 is no water at the FS tank at flat roof, does it have an</p> <p>25 impact on the firefighting work at the buildings?</p>

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<p>1 MR HUI KIN ON: If we are to turn up at the scene, at the 2 building, we have to make use of the fire hydrant 3 system. There would be an impact if there's no water at 4 the FS tank at the flat roof. 5 MR SW LEE: Second, you can supply water to the hose from 6 the street fire hydrant; right? 7 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 8 MR SW LEE: Similarly, if the booster pump is not in order, 9 then there will be certain level of impact at the 10 initial stage to your firefighting work; right? 11 MR HUI KIN ON: If we're able to gain entry into the 12 building to make use of the fire hydrant/hose reel 13 system to put out fire, then there would have been an 14 impact. 15 MR SW LEE: Now, if the booster pump was turned off or not 16 in order, are there any additional tools of the FSD to 17 add pressure to the water? 18 MR HUI KIN ON: We can rely on a major pump to add pressure, 19 but that would not have been as effective as using the 20 normal booster pump at the building. 21 MR SW LEE: So to a certain extent there is impact to the 22 firefighting work if the fire hydrant/hose reel system 23 is not in order at the building? 24 MR HUI KIN ON: Agreed. 25 MR SW LEE: Now on to the third part. We understand that</p>	<p>1 and tools, and considering the circumstances at the 2 time, was there actually a way to remove those obstacles 3 at the time? 4 MR HUI KIN ON: Do you mean the debris that had fallen down 5 and piled up? 6 MR SW LEE: Yes, there were many objects still burning on 7 the ground. 8 MR HUI KIN ON: We certainly had larger equipment and 9 specialised teams for handling this kind of major 10 disaster, but at that time, there were many debris that 11 kept falling from above. That is, after we had removed 12 the debris, there were more that kept falling from 13 above, so it was very challenging. 14 MR SW LEE: Is it the case that during the early stage when 15 you tried to enter Wang Cheong House, there were 16 colleagues who had already been injured? 17 MR HUI KIN ON: That is what I understood afterwards, yes. 18 (English simultaneous interpretation resumed) 19 MR SW LEE: At what stage, according to your understanding, 20 after you became the incident commander, do you know 21 when could you actually get into Wang Cheong House to 22 put out the fire? 23 MR HUI KIN ON: I only knew after that, that it was at 24 around 4 pm that we could get in and we started putting 25 out fire from the lower floors.</p>
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<p>1 there is EVA, emergency vehicle access, at Wang Fuk 2 Court and we know that at the scene there were some 3 limitations barring some vehicles going near the 4 buildings that were on fire. Do you remember it? 5 MR HUI KIN ON: Take my platform as example. We have to 6 step back to avoid being damaged by the falling bamboo 7 sticks. There were bamboo sticks and miscellaneous 8 objects falling from building and that posed a challenge 9 to us. 10 (No simultaneous English interpretation available) 11 MR SW LEE: I've been to the site. I've seen the area 12 between the building and the emergency vehicle access. 13 Some of your colleagues explained to us that there were 14 railings, spaces that could be used as a park, and trees 15 planted, so even though they wanted to park the vehicles 16 there, it was difficult to immediately remove those. 17 Obstacles. Based on your firsthand experience in 18 the firefighting operation that day, was this one reason 19 that made rescue efforts difficult? 20 MR HUI KIN ON: The facilities there undoubtedly posed 21 challenges to our firefighting and rescue operations. 22 MR SW LEE: What concerns me most is, especially around the 23 building's entrance and exit, the situation you 24 mentioned earlier where many bamboo sticks and burning 25 debris were falling, given the FSD's existing technology</p>	<p>1 MR SW LEE: Normally, when you get into a scene, what kind 2 of equipment do you need? Let's talk about the 3 equipment you need first. 4 MR HUI KIN ON: When we firefighters get into a fire scene, 5 we have protective clothing. 6 MR SW LEE: That is what we call the gold firemen clothes or 7 uniform? 8 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. We also have a helmet, a torch, as 9 well as a pair of gloves. We also have a pair of boots. 10 We also wear breathing apparatus, especially when we 11 enter scene with thick smoke. We also have a mask. 12 MR SW LEE: Take Wang Fuk Court as an example. We know that 13 the fire started from the outer part. I want to talk 14 about the temperature inside the buildings. As far as 15 you understand, do you know the temperature inside the 16 buildings? 17 MR HUI KIN ON: I don't know. 18 MR SW LEE: It could get up to 400 to 500 degrees Celsius. 19 According to your training, could it get that hot? 20 MR HUI KIN ON: Yes. 21 MR SW LEE: You have the protective gear that's called the 22 PBI Matrix. How hot can it withstand? 23 MR HUI KIN ON: Normally speaking, it can withstand 400 to 24 500 degrees Celsius. 25 MR SW LEE: If the lift is not working -- well, we know that</p>

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<p>1 there are 31 floors in total -- if you try to get in</p> <p>2 from the ground floor, can you walk up the stairs and</p> <p>3 get to the top?</p> <p>4 MR HUI KIN ON: I think it depends on the situation at the</p> <p>5 staircase. It depends on the scale of the fire and the</p> <p>6 level of smoke.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: Well, of course if there is thick smoke,</p> <p>8 you would not be able to get up; right?</p> <p>9 MR HUI KIN ON: I think it would be a great challenge.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: Lastly, I'd like to show you a few pictures so</p> <p>11 that you can confirm with us the situation at that time.</p> <p>12 I'd like to show you pictures of Wang Fuk Court before</p> <p>13 the fire. This is Wang Tai House. We see that there</p> <p>14 were no scaffoldings and this seems to be the front</p> <p>15 entrance; right?</p> <p>16 MR HUI KIN ON: I'm not sure if it's the front entrance.</p> <p>17 MR SW LEE: So this is a picture showing Wang Tai House</p> <p>18 before the fire without scaffolding. I'd like to show</p> <p>19 you other pictures. Let's look at pictures showing the</p> <p>20 situation after the fire. The one below, it shows that</p> <p>21 there were scaffolding that collapsed. Can you tell if</p> <p>22 this is the front entrance, the picture just now? It</p> <p>23 shows that your colleague was there.</p> <p>24 MR HUI KIN ON: It shows that --</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: There is the front entrance. There are</p>	<p>1 on the situation at the scene, get into the buildings to</p> <p>2 put out the fire as early as possible. At that stage,</p> <p>3 both my colleagues and I wanted to conduct the</p> <p>4 firefighting and rescue operation. We would definitely</p> <p>5 implement any recommended measures after the findings of</p> <p>6 the committee are out.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: Yes, we will definitely make recommendations but</p> <p>8 we want to hear from you to see what we should take into</p> <p>9 consideration. And also, based on your experience, we</p> <p>10 know that the fire alarm system was not working.</p> <p>11 So we know that not a lot of manpower could be</p> <p>12 deployed to evacuate all residents by knocking on their</p> <p>13 doors one by one, so what do you think could have been</p> <p>14 done, given that the fire alarm system was not working?</p> <p>15 MR HUI KIN ON: I think when the frontline officers are at</p> <p>16 the scene -- that is in retrospect, perhaps there could</p> <p>17 be better broadcasting system in place to let residents</p> <p>18 inside the buildings know that there was a fire. We</p> <p>19 discussed it just now. If we knew that the spreading of</p> <p>20 the fire was inevitable, could we deploy more manpower</p> <p>21 to use loudspeakers to tell people to leave? That is,</p> <p>22 if we knew the spread of the fire was inevitable,</p> <p>23 perhaps we would do this.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: Both members of the public as well as members of</p> <p>25 the media said there is an alert system from the</p>
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<p>1 collapsed scaffolding as well as burnt bamboo sticks.</p> <p>2 So, at the end, how did you manage to remove these from</p> <p>3 Wang Cheong to Wang Tai House? What did you do to</p> <p>4 remove these obstacles?</p> <p>5 MR HUI KIN ON: There were many burning debris falling from</p> <p>6 height, and during the firefighting operation there were</p> <p>7 bamboo sticks falling from height and we removed the</p> <p>8 bamboo sticks that piled up.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: Did you do it manually?</p> <p>10 MR HUI KIN ON: At that time we did it manually to establish</p> <p>11 an access. And if we were able to gain entry to the</p> <p>12 building, we tried to do so. Our goal is not to remove</p> <p>13 all the debris. We just tried to establish an access,</p> <p>14 a clear access so that we could gain entry to the</p> <p>15 building. But there were bamboo sticks falling from</p> <p>16 height again and so we had to repeat the action.</p> <p>17 MR SW LEE: As I said, we want to learn a lesson from this.</p> <p>18 You were the incident commander for about half an hour.</p> <p>19 Now, looking back, on assessing the situation at the</p> <p>20 scene, especially on making arrangements for the rescue</p> <p>21 operation, you were one of the frontline officers. What</p> <p>22 do you think you could have done to make the operation</p> <p>23 smoother?</p> <p>24 MR HUI KIN ON: This is a large-scale fire and it was</p> <p>25 unprecedented. At that time, all of us wanted to, based</p>	<p>1 government that could tell people that when there is</p> <p>2 a major incident, the government could have issued an</p> <p>3 alert through the mobile app system. If that system was</p> <p>4 used back then --</p> <p>5 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Is he the suitable person to</p> <p>6 answer this question?</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: He was one of the frontline officers.</p> <p>8 Perhaps resources could have been saved by making</p> <p>9 use of the system to alert the people?</p> <p>10 MR HUI KIN ON: Right. Yes.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: I don't have any other questions.</p> <p>12 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Any other parties? Perhaps</p> <p>13 the Government should wait until the end to pose</p> <p>14 questions.</p> <p>15 Any other parties that would like to pose questions?</p> <p>16 Questions by THE MEMBERS</p> <p>17 DR REX AUYEUNG PAK-KUEN: Thank you, chairman.</p> <p>18 Mr Hui, I have a question for you. You talked about</p> <p>19 the gear as well as the PBI Matrix. Is the gear we have</p> <p>20 the best in the world? Do you think we need to make any</p> <p>21 improvements in this regard?</p> <p>22 MR HUI KIN ON: My understanding is that the gear and the</p> <p>23 protective equipment we have is quite advanced in the</p> <p>24 world and they are quite fire-resistant or fireproof.</p> <p>25 As to whether we should have better protective gear,</p>

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<p>1 I believe the authority would review this from time to</p> <p>2 time.</p> <p>3 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: I have follow-up questions as</p> <p>4 well. The oxygen system is crucial. This is because</p> <p>5 not only firefighters would use it but also the people</p> <p>6 you rescue. But, as far as I understand, they could</p> <p>7 last for up to 30 minutes. This is so crucial for your</p> <p>8 firefighting operation. Have you learned about the</p> <p>9 relevant standards in the mainland or in other places?</p> <p>10 Some say that you have two cylinders but could they be</p> <p>11 combined into one and could that be made less heavy?</p> <p>12 Has the FSD thought about that? Of course I will ask</p> <p>13 the commander later, but you, as a user, have you</p> <p>14 thought about this?</p> <p>15 MR HUI KIN ON: I understand where you are coming from.</p> <p>16 That is, if it could last longer, it would be more</p> <p>17 helpful to us. And for sure, yes. But I don't know</p> <p>18 about the standards adopted by other places in the</p> <p>19 world. Perhaps the relevant officials could reply to</p> <p>20 your questions. I could not answer this question.</p> <p>21 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: I want to know if frontline</p> <p>22 officers have raised this before. Were there any</p> <p>23 discussions or questions before?</p> <p>24 MR HUI KIN ON: There are appropriate channels for us to</p> <p>25 express our views to the management as well as to the</p>	<p>1 at the rooftop, what would your colleagues do? Would</p> <p>2 your colleagues connect the street hydrant with the</p> <p>3 water hoses?</p> <p>4 MR HUI KIN ON: If the water pumps do not work, we would</p> <p>5 directly connect our water hoses to the water appliances</p> <p>6 through the street hydrant and from the fire appliances</p> <p>7 the water would go to the building. So the fire</p> <p>8 appliance would add pressure to the water for the</p> <p>9 firefighting operation. So when we draw water from the</p> <p>10 street hydrant, we would rely on our fire appliances to</p> <p>11 add pressure.</p> <p>12 MR JENKIN SUEN: In other words, if there is an absence of</p> <p>13 water of the rooftop tank, then you will make use of the</p> <p>14 street fire hydrant through the booster in your</p> <p>15 appliance and connect the supply of water to the hydrant</p> <p>16 system to supply water for firefighting?</p> <p>17 MR HUI KIN ON: Right.</p> <p>18 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Anything to add?</p> <p>19 MR SW LEE: No.</p> <p>20 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: It is a heavy morning. There</p> <p>21 will be criticism and review on the policy of the Fire</p> <p>22 Services Department. However, that is separated from</p> <p>23 our view of firefighters.</p> <p>24 We have heard from residents in this hearing that</p> <p>25 they greatly appreciate the work of the firefighters and</p>
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<p>1 authority in relation to our views on the equipment.</p> <p>2 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: Have you raised these questions</p> <p>3 before?</p> <p>4 MR HUI KIN ON: I believe my colleagues can make use of</p> <p>5 appropriate channels to reflect this to the management</p> <p>6 in relation to the breathing equipment.</p> <p>7 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Earlier in the hearing</p> <p>8 a resident said that the pressure of the fire hydrant or</p> <p>9 hose reel system was not sufficient. Do you think this</p> <p>10 is a correct observation? You said you drew water from</p> <p>11 the street hydrant.</p> <p>12 MR HUI KIN ON: We made use of the street hydrant in</p> <p>13 Wang Fuk Court. From my observation, from when we drew</p> <p>14 water to when we applied the hoses, I did not see any</p> <p>15 insufficient pressure. I would have been aware of it if</p> <p>16 there were not enough water pressure.</p> <p>17 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Mr Suen?</p> <p>18 Examination by MR JENKIN SUEN</p> <p>19 MR JENKIN SUEN: Thank you. I only have one follow-up</p> <p>20 question.</p> <p>21 Just now the chairman asked about the situation of</p> <p>22 water supply. Just now Mr Lee asked you, if there was</p> <p>23 no water in the FS tank on the rooftop, would there be</p> <p>24 any impact? I'm not sure if you could answer my</p> <p>25 question. Even though there was no water in the FS tank</p>	<p>1 they express their gratitude.</p> <p>2 I understand that this fire is of a magnitude that</p> <p>3 is unprecedented, never seen by firefighters. I believe</p> <p>4 that I can say, on behalf of Wang Fuk Court residents</p> <p>5 and the general public, that we are thankful to</p> <p>6 frontline firefighters and we'd like to thank you for</p> <p>7 your hard work. We believe that you have done your best</p> <p>8 given the circumstances. That's the end of your</p> <p>9 testimony.</p> <p>10 MR HUI KIN ON: Thank you.</p> <p>11 (The witness was released)</p> <p>12 (12.01 pm)</p> <p>13 MR SW LEE: Chairman, the next witness is Cheung Lok Hang.</p> <p>14 He is the station commander of Tai Po Fire Station. His</p> <p>15 rank is a deputy divisional officer.</p> <p>16 Mr Cheung, please be upstanding and read out the</p> <p>17 declaration in front of you.</p> <p>18 (12.02 pm)</p> <p>19 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG (affirmed)</p> <p>20 Examination by MR SW LEE</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: Mr Cheung, you joined the Fire Services</p> <p>22 Department in 2010; right?</p> <p>23 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: In 2023 you were promoted to the rank of</p> <p>25 assistant divisional officer?</p>

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1 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.
 2 MR SW LEE: You're responsible for the Tai Po Fire Station,
 3 your position is the station commander.
 4 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: It was February 2025 when I became the
 5 station commander of Tai Po Fire Station.
 6 MR SW LEE: Are you still the station commander of Tai Po?
 7 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.
 8 MR SW LEE: In relation to the Wang Fuk Court fire, we
 9 understand that you have made one witness statement to
 10 the Committee; right?
 11 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 12 MR SW LEE: You have talked about what is true to your
 13 knowledge and belief in the statement; right?
 14 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 15 MR SW LEE: We refer to the record in relation to the
 16 firefighting and rescue; B10, page 5091. The record is
 17 about 15:04:11. There is a record stating that after
 18 receiving a request from the control centre you went to
 19 the scene; right.
 20 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 21 MR SW LEE: At 15:59:58, we see an entry, that is you
 22 arrived at the scene and took over command from your
 23 colleague Mr Hui?
 24 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.
 25 MR SW LEE: Before we go into details, let me refer you to

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1 page 5109. At 15:34, another colleague, that is your
 2 supervisor Mr Lam, arrived at the scene and upgraded the
 3 alarm to a No. 4 alarm.
 4 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 5 MR SW LEE: So from alarm No. 3 to No. 4, the decision was
 6 not made by you?
 7 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Let me put it this way. I told Mr Lam
 8 my observation and my advice to assist him to make that
 9 decision.
 10 MR SW LEE: Right. First, about your arrival, that is at
 11 15:19, in general, is it the case that when the FSD
 12 receives more than one call for assistance, an officer
 13 of your rank should arrive at the scene; right?
 14 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes. The control centre will inform us
 15 and dispatch us.
 16 MR SW LEE: The second call for assistance was at around
 17 14:53. It was received by the control centre or 999.
 18 And at 15:04 an instruction was given to you to send you
 19 to the scene. Do you know why there was a gap of a few
 20 minutes?
 21 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No idea.
 22 MR SW LEE: I believe you were on duty at Tai Po Fire
 23 Station; right?
 24 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At that moment, yes.
 25 MR SW LEE: You said you were posted to Tai Po Fire Station

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1 in February 2025.
 2 I'd like to ask you what happened when you were
 3 dispatched. We heard that advance information would be
 4 given to frontline officers. Was it the same for you
 5 when you were asked to go to the scene in relation to
 6 Wang Fuk Court, you were aware of the contingency plan
 7 given the major renovation?
 8 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes, I knew that beforehand.
 9 MR SW LEE: Do you know that there is a shutdown notice
 10 received by the Fire Services Department in relation to
 11 the shutting down of some fire services installations
 12 because of the renovation?
 13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: My recollection is that at the time
 14 when I received the call, when I asked what appliances
 15 had been dispatched, it was mentioned to me by the
 16 control centre.
 17 MR SW LEE: Were you aware of the specific details, say, for
 18 example, what FSI was ineffective?
 19 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No.
 20 MR SW LEE: So you knew there was ineffective FSI but you
 21 did not know what?
 22 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 23 MR SW LEE: At 15:19, when you arrived at the scene, as you
 24 recall, at the scene, how many officers were there? Can
 25 you remember?

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1 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: When I was dispatched I knew there were
 2 about 12 appliances. When I arrived there were more.
 3 MR SW LEE: So by number of firefighters, how many were
 4 there?
 5 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: About 100.
 6 MR SW LEE: At 15:34, before the fire was upgraded to No. 4
 7 alarm, you were at the scene and someone reported to you
 8 because at 15:25, we see at 15:25, that is 33 minutes
 9 after the call was received, you received a message for
 10 relaying to the control centre; right?
 11 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 12 MR SW LEE: Looking at the record, can you tell us what did
 13 you want to say by the message?
 14 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At 15:25, of course I did certain
 15 things beforehand, but at that time I had certain
 16 information, that is two blocks were already on fire,
 17 that is Wang Cheong House and Wang Tai House. The third
 18 block, that is Wang Shing House, was seen with glows.
 19 MR SW LEE: According to your record, according to you, the
 20 two blocks were well alight, that means the fire was
 21 quite serious, and three more blocks, Wang Shing, Wang
 22 Kin and Wang Sun, you did not say "well alight" but you
 23 said "alight". So they were on fire.
 24 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.
 25 MR SW LEE: So from your observation, out of the eight

Page 61	<p>1 blocks, five blocks were already on fire?</p> <p>2 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: Let's skip to the last line. You talked about</p> <p>4 miscellaneous items, bamboo sticks, falling from height.</p> <p>5 From your observation, was it the result of</p> <p>6 a scaffolding being on fire?</p> <p>7 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes, scaffolding as well as</p> <p>8 miscellaneous items.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: So you arrived at the scene, you took over as</p> <p>10 the incident command and you made a report to the</p> <p>11 control centre. At that time, you were aware that it</p> <p>12 was a No. 3 alarm. At 15:25, did you consider upgrading</p> <p>13 the alarm?</p> <p>14 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: I was still conducting the assessment</p> <p>15 as to whether there was such a need.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: You arrived at the scene, you took over as the</p> <p>17 incident command. In relation to evacuation, had you</p> <p>18 considered about that?</p> <p>19 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: So you were talking about the evacuation of the</p> <p>21 five blocks alight or the entire complex?</p> <p>22 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At that time I saw that the fire was</p> <p>23 spreading very quickly. What I saw was that people were</p> <p>24 escaping from the blocks. At that time, I did not know</p> <p>25 that the fire alarm system was ineffective.</p>	Page 63	<p>1 that is 15:27, some other officers ask for compartment</p> <p>2 fire specialist to arrive at the scene. Were you aware</p> <p>3 of that?</p> <p>4 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes, afterwards.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: So you were not the one to make the request?</p> <p>6 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: Do you know this CFS, this team or this unit?</p> <p>8 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes, I do.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: Can you tell us what do they do? How are they</p> <p>10 different from frontline firefighters?</p> <p>11 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: The CFS, the compartment fire</p> <p>12 specialist, in general are attached at the Fire and</p> <p>13 Ambulance Services Academy, they are instructors</p> <p>14 providing actual training to officers. So, in terms of</p> <p>15 experience in firefighting, they have rich experience.</p> <p>16 They are called "compartment fire specialist". They are</p> <p>17 specialists when it comes to indoor fires because we</p> <p>18 understand that, in general, for No. 3 or No. 4 alarms,</p> <p>19 they will be mobilised to attend the scene.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: From your colleagues we learned that Wang Cheong</p> <p>21 was one of the first blocks on fire and it was the most</p> <p>22 serious. It was difficult to send officers to go inside</p> <p>23 to rescue and fight fire, so, as far as you recall, at</p> <p>24 that time could your officers enter Wang Cheong House?</p> <p>25 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No.</p>
Page 62	<p>1 MR SW LEE: When did you know about the failure of the fire</p> <p>2 alarm system?</p> <p>3 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: About 15:35 to 15:40.</p> <p>4 MR SW LEE: When you arrived at the scene, was there anyone</p> <p>5 from the management office who came to you or did you</p> <p>6 ask to see them?</p> <p>7 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: I did not see any such people.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: So you arrived and shortly afterwards you were</p> <p>9 aware that the fire alarm system was ineffective?</p> <p>10 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: Having learned that, did you give any</p> <p>12 instructions to frontline officers?</p> <p>13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: What I saw was that people were</p> <p>14 escaping from the blocks. The difficulty we faced was</p> <p>15 the rapid spread of the fire. At that point, I thought</p> <p>16 members of the public could learn from different means.</p> <p>17 Say, for example, sirens or other means to learn about</p> <p>18 the fire. The decision made at that time was that we</p> <p>19 need to send officers to control the fire, to contain</p> <p>20 the spread, to buy more time for people to escape. If</p> <p>21 I deployed manpower resources for other duties, it would</p> <p>22 affect the efficiency of the firefighting. So my focus</p> <p>23 was to control the fire as much as possible to buy time</p> <p>24 for people to escape.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: At 15:27, let's look at page 5104, at that time,</p>	Page 64	<p>1 MR SW LEE: Did you give any additional instructions to</p> <p>2 remove obstacles blocking the two entrances?</p> <p>3 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: My instruction was to ask frontline</p> <p>4 officers to do their best to remove obstacles blocking</p> <p>5 the entrances so that they will be able to breach the</p> <p>6 blockade and enter the block to help evacuate residents.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: We know that there was a shutdown notice in</p> <p>8 relation to the FSI at Wang Fuk Court. Last week we</p> <p>9 heard evidence that Tai Po Fire Station sent officers</p> <p>10 for an on-site inspection to first formulate the</p> <p>11 contingency plan and to conduct an inspection in</p> <p>12 relation to the FSI shutdown.</p> <p>13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: In relation to the inspection, when you receive</p> <p>15 the shutdown notice, you send someone there within</p> <p>16 24 hours; right?</p> <p>17 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: In relation to Wang Fuk Court, did you</p> <p>19 personally go to the scene to carry out inspections?</p> <p>20 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: Usually you send your subordinates to do that;</p> <p>22 right?</p> <p>23 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: The purpose of the inspection was what?</p> <p>25 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: The main purpose was to see if there</p>

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<p>1 was any special risks or premises with special purposes</p> <p>2 such as kindergartens, elderly homes or dangerous goods</p> <p>3 godown which will heighten the risk, whether there is</p> <p>4 sufficient supply of water and whether there is easy</p> <p>5 vehicular access. We will make corresponding</p> <p>6 arrangements after the inspection, to reduce risk.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: In short, because of the additional risk from</p> <p>8 the FSI failure, you will need to take additional</p> <p>9 measures?</p> <p>10 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes, in terms of operation.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: The scope of your inspection, I believe it's not</p> <p>12 your decision?</p> <p>13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: Are there guidelines from the FSD saying that</p> <p>15 the local fire station is only in charge of inspection</p> <p>16 and risk assessment?</p> <p>17 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: As to identifying problematic FSIs, whether</p> <p>19 there was actually a need for shutdown and follow-up</p> <p>20 action, would it be done by the local fire station?</p> <p>21 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: We will liaise with them to see if the</p> <p>22 installations have been repaired. When it comes to</p> <p>23 verification and check of the defects, it's not the fire</p> <p>24 station to do it. When it comes to verification, it's</p> <p>25 done on the phone, that is to ask whether the FSI has</p>	<p>1 notice can be lifted.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: As set out in the guidelines, if it happens for</p> <p>3 so long, more than 60 days, then the Licensing and</p> <p>4 Certification Command will be responsible. Now, after</p> <p>5 the Licensing and Certification Command have taken up</p> <p>6 the case, what about the Tai Po Fire Station; apart from</p> <p>7 risk assessment, is there any other things they are</p> <p>8 responsible for?</p> <p>9 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Nothing else.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: We heard from your colleague just now that in</p> <p>11 the case of Wang Fuk Court, when you are trying to put</p> <p>12 out the fire and trying to save lives, you come across</p> <p>13 many different types of difficulties. There were</p> <p>14 falling miscellaneous articles, bamboo sticks, and you</p> <p>15 also had difficulties trying to gain entry into the</p> <p>16 buildings.</p> <p>17 Now, looking back, you, as one of the frontline</p> <p>18 officers, is there anything that you think can be</p> <p>19 improved? Say, for example, in terms of installations</p> <p>20 or equipment or firefighting strategy?</p> <p>21 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Let me addresses your question on</p> <p>22 equipment. We all know that the Hong Kong Fire Services</p> <p>23 Department leads the world in terms of firefighting</p> <p>24 equipment. In terms of strategy, this fire is of</p> <p>25 a magnitude that has never happened before. The fire</p>
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<p>1 been shut down, just to verify the accuracy of the</p> <p>2 information.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: In relation to Wang Fuk Court, on 7 April 2025,</p> <p>4 one of the blocks made a submission to the FSD about the</p> <p>5 shutting down of the fire hydrant and hose reel system.</p> <p>6 We know that the FS tank would be affected. Were you</p> <p>7 aware of that at that time?</p> <p>8 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: So before the fire, that is in the eight or nine</p> <p>10 months, did the Tai Po Fire Station send officers to the</p> <p>11 complex to learn from the contractors or the management</p> <p>12 office as to the actual scope of the repair work?</p> <p>13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No, not in detail because we received</p> <p>14 a shutdown notice. There may be many reasons for the</p> <p>15 shutdown notice. When it comes to operations, all we</p> <p>16 need to know is that the system cannot function properly</p> <p>17 so we put in place a standby means as well as risk</p> <p>18 assessment.</p> <p>19 MR SW LEE: So, as far as you understand, the system was</p> <p>20 shut down for eight to nine months. If we are to follow</p> <p>21 up on the shutdown, which department would be</p> <p>22 responsible for that?</p> <p>23 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: The fire station would follow up on it.</p> <p>24 We would try to learn about the progress of the repair</p> <p>25 and maintenance. We would try to see if the shutdown</p>	<p>1 normally does not spread vertically and horizontally so</p> <p>2 fast. If we're talking about a normal fire, in terms of</p> <p>3 our rescue strategies, there should have been passive</p> <p>4 fire services installation to slow down the spread of</p> <p>5 the fire. Maybe the fire could have spread to one more</p> <p>6 flat next to it or the upper floor, but for this fire,</p> <p>7 it spread horizontally and vertically to other blocks</p> <p>8 rapidly. So in terms of our search and rescue</p> <p>9 strategies, it is not enough to cope with the fire that</p> <p>10 happened at Wang Fuk Court. We identified these</p> <p>11 problems after the fact. We need to understand why the</p> <p>12 fire broke out.</p> <p>13 I thank the chairman for your help in looking into</p> <p>14 this matter. That's my reply.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: That's about the equipment.</p> <p>16 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: I was talking about the guideline.</p> <p>17 MR SW LEE: We understand that there was a turntable ladder.</p> <p>18 That was one of the fire appliances at the scene.</p> <p>19 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Right.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: There was criticism saying that the FSD did not</p> <p>21 deploy enough turntable ladders and the ladder did not</p> <p>22 reach high enough, and some people criticised that no</p> <p>23 water bombs were being deployed and there were not</p> <p>24 enough water jets.</p> <p>25 Now, take water bombs as an example. Is this, in</p>

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1 your view, a useful firefighting strategy?
 2 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Absolutely not.
 3 MR SW LEE: Why not?
 4 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: First of all, we need to understand the
 5 consequences of water bombs. According to our past
 6 experience, if we use helicopters, after we deploy it to
 7 the scene, there will be pressure generated by the
 8 helicopter and many uncertainties would arise from the
 9 air pressure. It will affect the speed of the spread of
 10 the fire because the airflow may be blown in different
 11 directions.
 12 Now, looking back, maybe the fire would have spread
 13 to Wang Chi House if we had deployed the helicopter.
 14 This is something that we cannot tell.
 15 Second, the effectiveness of water bombs. One of
 16 the major difficulties we faced is the vertical and
 17 horizontal spread of the fire and its speed. The fire
 18 spread not just to other facades, but into the flats.
 19 Many of the flats were burnt. If we made use of water
 20 bombs, the fire inside the flat would not be able to be
 21 put out. The water bombs may not be able to put out the
 22 fire inside the flats and that may cause more danger.
 23 MR SW LEE: We talked about the turntable ladder for
 24 Wang Tai House. What does this turntable ladder serve
 25 in the search and rescue operation?

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1 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: That's what we call turntable ladder.
 2 It serves as a tool to control the fire in the vicinity.
 3 MR SW LEE: You tried to apply water jets to the fire to
 4 control its spread by using the turntable ladder; is
 5 that right?
 6 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Correct.
 7 MR SW LEE: One of the major factors affecting the level of
 8 the fire alarm is that the higher the fire alarm is, the
 9 more resources you have to deploy because the higher the
 10 level of the fire alarm, the fiercer the fire is; right?
 11 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Correct.
 12 MR SW LEE: The fire was upgraded to fire alarm No. 4 and
 13 you were not the one to make the decision. Now we'd
 14 like to conduct a review to see if there is any room for
 15 improvement. If we had upgraded the alarm from No. 3 to
 16 No. 4 earlier, such that more resources could have been
 17 deployed to the scene, do you think that would be
 18 helpful in controlling the fire?
 19 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Regarding this particular incident, in
 20 terms of resources deployment, before we upgraded the
 21 fire to alarm No. 3, the scale was near that of alarm
 22 No. 3. When it was just at alarm No. 1, because we have
 23 had regards to the number of assistance calls received
 24 and the fact that many FSIs were shut down, we deployed
 25 extra fire appliances already. So we had deployed many

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1 fire appliances already, given that it was just at fire
 2 alarm No. 1. It was near the scale of fire alarm No. 3.
 3 At 3.21 pm, the Director of Fire Services had
 4 already established the directors post command, sending
 5 some 25 fire appliances to the scene, approximately
 6 100 firefighters.
 7 MR SW LEE: The reason why I was so concerned about the
 8 turntable ladder or the aerial ladder is because they
 9 serve a certain purpose or function in controlling the
 10 fire in the vicinity. At the fire alarm No. 3, there
 11 were only two turntable ladders, 137 metres and
 12 155 metres. Do you remember it?
 13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: The information is correct. The
 14 incident commander had the power to request for extra
 15 resources. At 15:39 we deployed three other turntable
 16 ladders to the scene.
 17 MR SW LEE: That was your attempt to control the fire in the
 18 vicinity?
 19 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Correct.
 20 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: In terms of numbers, there
 21 were in fact many fire appliances, given the fact that
 22 it was only a fire alarm No. 1. Before the fire was
 23 spreading very rapidly, given so many vehicles there,
 24 there was only one roundabout. So, many vehicles were
 25 left idle; am I right? Even if there were so many fire

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1 appliances, it wouldn't help the fire at Wang Cheong
 2 House because there was limited space at the roundabout.
 3 Do you have any comment regarding my observation?
 4 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes. That explains why we need the
 5 contingency plan to learn about the environment at
 6 scene. Apart from the EVA at the roundabout at the rear
 7 facade of Wang Cheong House, there was Island House
 8 Lane. We had fire appliances there to put out fire.
 9 There were a few residents who were able to escape from
 10 the rear entrance of Wang Cheong House and we were able
 11 to rescue them.
 12 We had many fire appliances. We've learned about
 13 the landscape, the environment of the complex. We were
 14 able to deploy the fire appliances at different
 15 locations. Different appliances have different roles to
 16 play. We have major pump, for example. They have
 17 regard to their own roles and they were able to park at
 18 a suitable location, that is at Kwong Wang Street.
 19 There is a street fire hydrant there.
 20 MR SW LEE: To assist you, let me show you a layout of the
 21 scene so that we follow you.
 22 This is the location of the fire appliances.
 23 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: This is where the turntable ladders
 24 were. Other fire appliances are not shown.
 25 MR SW LEE: We see a blue vehicle in the middle. That's

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<p>1 where the roundabout was?</p> <p>2 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.</p> <p>3 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Where did you come up with</p> <p>4 this photo?</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: B5/4433.</p> <p>6 If you just look at the image -- I've not calculated</p> <p>7 the distance between the blocks -- it seems that the</p> <p>8 turntable ladders were quite far away from the</p> <p>9 buildings. Does that have any impact, say, for example,</p> <p>10 the water pressure of the jets?</p> <p>11 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: The appliances were positioned</p> <p>12 strategically. There are many factors affecting the</p> <p>13 location, say for example, the falling bamboo sticks,</p> <p>14 the source of water, there would be a reason for why the</p> <p>15 appliances were positioned there.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: But that would not affect the effectiveness?</p> <p>17 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No.</p> <p>18 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: When was the deployment or</p> <p>19 positioning being made? This was the time when the</p> <p>20 alarm was upgraded to No. 5?</p> <p>21 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Correct.</p> <p>22 DR REX AUYEUNG PAK-KUEN: I have one question. Thank you,</p> <p>23 Mr Cheung. Can you let us know what the evacuation</p> <p>24 procedure is as the commander? When do you decide an</p> <p>25 evacuation was needed?</p>	<p>1 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: The site team coordinated the operation</p> <p>2 and evacuated all of the buildings.</p> <p>3 DR REX AUYEUNG PAK-KUEN: We understand that you have</p> <p>4 dispatched more firefighters than required for fire</p> <p>5 alarm No. 5. If you had dispatched more, would that</p> <p>6 speed up the evacuation?</p> <p>7 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At the initial stage, the difficulty we</p> <p>8 faced was the speed of the spread of the fire, we could</p> <p>9 not gain entry into the buildings. That's why we</p> <p>10 deployed firefighters to suppress the fire, to remove</p> <p>11 the bamboo sticks, so that we could gain entry into the</p> <p>12 buildings.</p> <p>13 DR REX AUYEUNG PAK-KUEN: Thank you.</p> <p>14 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: I have one question. Many people</p> <p>15 were anxious when they watched what was happening on TV.</p> <p>16 They wondered why there were not more water jets aiming</p> <p>17 at the buildings. Can you address the concern?</p> <p>18 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: We, having regard to the actual</p> <p>19 circumstances, have deployed more than enough water jets</p> <p>20 to put out the fire. You may wonder if it's effective</p> <p>21 for us to deploy 10 more water jets. That's</p> <p>22 questionable but we were of the view that we had enough</p> <p>23 water jets aiming at the building.</p> <p>24 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: Thank you. As you're a station</p> <p>25 commander -- one point you talked about is that the</p>
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<p>1 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: We have some pre-established</p> <p>2 procedures. When we receive assistance calls, we</p> <p>3 dispatch our SAR team, search and rescue team. Our</p> <p>4 established procedures consist of the following steps.</p> <p>5 First of all, we need to send a team to the highest</p> <p>6 floor of the building to turn on the -- well, to open</p> <p>7 the door of the rooftop so that in case there is dense</p> <p>8 smoke at the staircase we can evacuate the residents,</p> <p>9 because the staircase is the main means of escape. If</p> <p>10 there is dense smoke, we need to open the door to the</p> <p>11 rooftop to diffuse the smoke and then we will conduct</p> <p>12 a quick search and rescue operation to see if there is</p> <p>13 anyone at the highest two floors, to see if there is</p> <p>14 anyone who has fainted there.</p> <p>15 We also had to go to the flats where the assistance</p> <p>16 calls came from.</p> <p>17 The difficulties that we faced was usually -- that</p> <p>18 would be effective for a fire that consist of one or two</p> <p>19 units. If we have a smoke-free staircase, then the</p> <p>20 fire -- the scale at Wang Fuk Court would not have</p> <p>21 broken out. But given the magnitude of the fire, that</p> <p>22 hampered our search and rescue strategy. This is beyond</p> <p>23 the scope that we could handle.</p> <p>24 DR REX AUYEUNG PAK-KUEN: Did you conduct or implement</p> <p>25 evacuation procedures for all of the blocks in tandem?</p>	<p>1 spread of the fire was of a speed that has never been</p> <p>2 seen before. Your usual practice is to go up to the</p> <p>3 unit that is on fire to put it out, but this time the</p> <p>4 fire was also on at the facade. So in terms of your</p> <p>5 training, it's not targeted at this type of fire. Of</p> <p>6 course there are many things you can do after the fact,</p> <p>7 but have you never foreseen such a fire happening and</p> <p>8 have you included that in your training course?</p> <p>9 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: In terms of our guidelines, in terms of</p> <p>10 design, in terms of the fire-resistant compartments,</p> <p>11 there should have been smoke-free staircase so that the</p> <p>12 fire would not escalate to such a scale. But for this</p> <p>13 case, the fire-resistance capabilities of the building</p> <p>14 was not up to par. Perhaps there were other reasons for</p> <p>15 why the fire spread so quickly.</p> <p>16 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: I have one more question. We have</p> <p>17 heard from the FSD saying that we should not take the</p> <p>18 lift when a fire breaks out, but I saw many people being</p> <p>19 able to escape by taking the lift. If they stayed at</p> <p>20 their own flat, if they took the staircase, they would</p> <p>21 have been trapped.</p> <p>22 So have you reviewed whether you should make a new</p> <p>23 suggestion? Should the people stay at their own flat?</p> <p>24 Should they take or not take the lift? Should they take</p> <p>25 the staircase?</p>

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<p>1 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Our general advice is this: if they are 2 able to escape, the most important thing is to see if 3 there is dense smoke. After they leave their flats, 4 they should use the nearest staircase to leave the 5 building. If they spot dense smoke, they should go back 6 to their own flat and seal the gaps with wet towels to 7 prevent smoke from entering the flat and they should 8 call the FSD as soon as possible, to let us know where 9 they are. 10 Regarding this incident, there were quite a number 11 of people who were able to be rescued by us at a later 12 stage. 13 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: Should people take the lift or 14 not? 15 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Normally speaking, we do not recommend 16 people to use the lift. 17 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: Also, we know that turntable 18 ladders can only reach up to the 15th floor. There are 19 many residents living on the higher floors. Should they 20 use staircases or should they go to the rooftop? Some 21 went to the rooftop but they were not rescued, so what 22 should people do? 23 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: My advice stays the same. If you see 24 dense smoke, you should go back to your flat immediately 25 and call us for help.</p>	<p>1 out from the hoses and the water would go to different 2 directions based on where the fire is, so they helped 3 put out the fire. 4 As for Wang Kin House and Wang Sun House, I asked 5 them to deploy those two hoses because I saw that there 6 was fire. So at a later stage I asked my colleagues to 7 deploy the two hoses. Of course there is also the red 8 turntable ladder and it was used to put out fire on the 9 upper floors. 10 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So there was no order made to 11 evacuate all residents? 12 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Not at that time. 13 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So throughout the entire 14 incident, no order was made to evacuate everyone? 15 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: When I was serving as commander, no. 16 I'd like to supplement, however, that I believe at 17 that moment a lot of residents knew that there was 18 a fire through the media as well as through our 19 announcement. I saw that many people were escaping so 20 I believe they were either escaping or they had already 21 escaped. 22 MR SW LEE: Chairman, I'd like to seek clarification on one 23 topic after the other parties have posed questions. 24 Examination by MARTIN HO 25 MR MARTIN HO: Mr Cheung, I represent ISS EastPoint. Just</p>
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<p>1 THE HON MR CHAN KIN-POR: So even after this incident, you 2 think this is the best way? 3 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes. 4 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: I have a question. Please 5 explain this map. Can you tell me the reference number? 6 MR SW LEE: Bundle B, page 5556. 7 This is the situation with the turntable ladders 8 during the No. 3 alarm fire. If you look at the next 9 map at page 5557, this is when the fire was upgraded to 10 No. 4. Bundle B10; page 5556 and 5557. If you go 11 further down to page 5558, it shows the map and the 12 situation when it's upgraded to No. 5. 13 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: We see that there were many 14 hoses as well as fire appliances when it was No. 4 and 15 No. 5. 16 Let's look at No. 3. Were there enough fire 17 appliances? 18 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At that time I think it was adequate. 19 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Could you please explain? 20 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At that time, Wang Cheong House saw 21 fire, it was the first block that caught fire. You see 22 these two hoses at Island House Lane were deployed by 23 Mr Hui at the beginning. 24 The fire spread, so two more hoses were deployed. 25 The two hoses were not static. There was water coming</p>	<p>1 now you were asked this question, when you arrived at 2 the scene was there anyone from the property management 3 company that approached you, and you said you didn't see 4 anyone from the property management company. I'd like 5 to seek clarification from you. Did you mean that you 6 wanted to reach out to the property management company 7 or did you not try to reach out to them at all? 8 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Well, from my perspective, no one from 9 the property management company approached me and I did 10 not approach them either. 11 MR MARTIN HO: So your answer is that it's not that you were 12 trying to look for the property management company staff 13 but you failed; right? 14 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: No. 15 MR MARTIN HO: We heard evidence during the hearing that one 16 officer from the property management company, Mr Lam Man 17 Yan, helped the police look at the layout as well as 18 helped the police officers understand the design of 19 Wang Fuk Court. How come you did not think of 20 approaching the property management company? Is it that 21 from the firefighting perspective there was no need to 22 look for them? 23 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At that moment I did not think there 24 was an urgent need to reach out to the property 25 management company. The fire was serious so I had to</p>

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<p>1 concentrate my effort on dealing with the fire, and</p> <p>2 given the fire at that time, I had already had the</p> <p>3 information I needed.</p> <p>4 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Any other parties?</p> <p>5 Mr Suen? No?</p> <p>6 Yes. Re-examination.</p> <p>7 Re-examination by MR SW LEE</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: Just now you mentioned that there was the search</p> <p>9 and rescue team. You said it was called SAR.</p> <p>10 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes, we call it SAR.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: I think it does not deal with evacuation. As</p> <p>12 far as I understand, this team received calls or</p> <p>13 received reports and they tried to conduct rescue</p> <p>14 operations, so their major duty is to get into the</p> <p>15 affected flats and try to rescue the trapped residents;</p> <p>16 right?</p> <p>17 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Well, I wouldn't separate their duties</p> <p>18 that way. Their major duty is to rescue the residents.</p> <p>19 As I said, the SAR team is formed by different officers</p> <p>20 and they all have different duties or tasks. One of</p> <p>21 their duties is to go to the rooftop to open the fire</p> <p>22 door and then they have to do a quick search to see if</p> <p>23 there was anyone trapped and we did not do it after</p> <p>24 waiting for any reports or calls for assistance. If we</p> <p>25 get any calls for assistance, we would also dispatch</p>	<p>1 message, did you make recommendations to him telling him</p> <p>2 that "You should upgrade the fire to No. 4", or did you</p> <p>3 only report the facts to him?</p> <p>4 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: I only reported the facts.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: So did you recommend to him that the fire should</p> <p>6 be upgraded to No. 4 alarm fire?</p> <p>7 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: I could not be sure.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: On the point about mayday message, I'd like to</p> <p>9 follow up with you. So you arrived and became the</p> <p>10 incident commander. Then you handed the rescue</p> <p>11 operation to Mr Hui, who gave evidence here just now;</p> <p>12 right?</p> <p>13 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Correct.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: And you did not take part directly in the rescue</p> <p>15 operation for Mr Ho Wai Ho?</p> <p>16 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: I asked him to report to me as soon as</p> <p>17 possible.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: So you supervised the operation but you did not</p> <p>19 give instructions yourself on what should be done?</p> <p>20 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Correct.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: I don't have any other questions, chairman.</p> <p>22 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Any other follow-up questions</p> <p>23 from other parties?</p> <p>24 I'd like to respond to the point about using</p> <p>25 helicopter in the firefighting operation. In the</p>
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<p>1 officers to conduct rescue operation. So I don't think</p> <p>2 we need to separate their duties that way.</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: What I meant was that they were not responsible</p> <p>4 for using the loudspeakers on the ground floor to ask</p> <p>5 people to evacuate; right?</p> <p>6 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: That was not their major duty.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: That was not their dedicated duty. So their</p> <p>8 major duty was to enter the buildings to rescue people.</p> <p>9 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: But we could deploy our officers to</p> <p>10 different duties based on the situation to offer help.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: You said you had made recommendations to your</p> <p>12 supervisor Mr Lam Ho Chun on upgrading the fire to No. 4</p> <p>13 alarm fire. Could you tell us when did you do that and</p> <p>14 what recommendations did you make?</p> <p>15 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: At around 15:32, at the roundabout</p> <p>16 I saw him. I told him what I knew, that is five blocks</p> <p>17 were on fire, especially the fire behind Wang Kin House.</p> <p>18 It was very severe. I also told him the resources were</p> <p>19 available, the challenges we were facing. I told him we</p> <p>20 got a mayday message so we had to rescue our colleague.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: What you're saying is that you told him what</p> <p>22 happened at 15:32; Mr Lam arrived at 15:29 and you gave</p> <p>23 him a report. Right?</p> <p>24 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Yes.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: Apart from telling him that there was a mayday</p>	<p>1 Garley Building fire, there was already reservation</p> <p>2 whether we should use helicopter. I saw that this was</p> <p>3 mentioned in some report as well. I'm not going to</p> <p>4 repeat all that I said to your colleague. I believe you</p> <p>5 already tried your best, so thank you for your hard</p> <p>6 work.</p> <p>7 You have finished giving your evidence today.</p> <p>8 MR CHEUNG LOK HANG: Thank you.</p> <p>9 (The witness was released)</p> <p>10 (12.51 pm)</p> <p>11 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: We still have two other</p> <p>12 witnesses; right?</p> <p>13 MR SW LEE: It's not going to take very long. I am</p> <p>14 confident that we will be able to hear the two witnesses</p> <p>15 this afternoon, so perhaps we could have an early lunch.</p> <p>16 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Let's come back at 14:15.</p> <p>17 (12.52 pm)</p> <p>18 (The luncheon adjournment)</p> <p>19 (2.15 pm)</p> <p>20 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Mr Lee.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: The next witness is the deputy divisional</p> <p>22 commander of NT East, Mr Lam Ho Chun.</p> <p>23 Mr Lam, before you is a declaration. Please be</p> <p>24 upstanding and read out the declaration.</p> <p>25 (2.15 pm)</p>

Page 85	<p>1 MR LAM HO CHUN (affirmed)</p> <p>2 Examination by MR SW LEE</p> <p>3 MR SW LEE: Please be seated. In relation to the</p> <p>4 investigation into Wang Fuk Court, I understand that you</p> <p>5 have submitted one witness statement to the Committee;</p> <p>6 right?</p> <p>7 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: The content of the statement is true and</p> <p>9 accurate, to the best of your knowledge and belief;</p> <p>10 right?</p> <p>11 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: Some background information. You joined the FSD</p> <p>13 in 2005?</p> <p>14 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: In 2023, you were promoted to your present rank</p> <p>16 which is the deputy divisional commander of NT East;</p> <p>17 right?</p> <p>18 MR LAM HO CHUN: I was promoted to this rank and in</p> <p>19 November 2025 I was posted to the New Territories East</p> <p>20 as the divisional commander.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: So you were the deputy divisional commander of</p> <p>22 NT East at the time of the fire; right?</p> <p>23 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: Let's look at B10/5105. You received a call,</p> <p>25 arrived at the scene at 15:29 at Wang Fuk Court; right?</p>	Page 87	<p>1 MR SW LEE: In relation to the rescue, can you give us more</p> <p>2 detail? What information were you given?</p> <p>3 MR LAM HO CHUN: When I arrived at the scene, at about 15:32</p> <p>4 senior station officer Hui Kin On reported to me the</p> <p>5 mayday message from Wai Ho. He briefly told me about</p> <p>6 what he did in an attempt to conduct the rescue</p> <p>7 operation.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: From the information received at that time, had</p> <p>9 Mr Ho Wai Ho been located?</p> <p>10 MR LAM HO CHUN: At that time, we did not know who sent the</p> <p>11 mayday message, neither did we know the exact location.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: So you did not know which colleague of yours</p> <p>13 sent the mayday message?</p> <p>14 MR LAM HO CHUN: We did not know at 15:32.</p> <p>15 MR SW LEE: At that time all you knew is that a colleague of</p> <p>16 yours sent a mayday message, but you did not know who</p> <p>17 that was from?</p> <p>18 MR LAM HO CHUN: Correct.</p> <p>19 MR SW LEE: Here it says:</p> <p>20 "ICS deployment as follows ..."</p> <p>21 And then there's further information. So what is</p> <p>22 this ICS?</p> <p>23 MR LAM HO CHUN: ICS is an acronym. The full name of it is</p> <p>24 incident command system. It's an acronym of the</p> <p>25 incident command system.</p>
Page 86	<p>1 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: You were the highest ranking officer at the</p> <p>3 scene; right?</p> <p>4 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: You took over the post as incident commander;</p> <p>6 right?</p> <p>7 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: At 15:34, in page 5109, you made a report, that</p> <p>9 is in relation to the scene. We will look at the</p> <p>10 details shortly.</p> <p>11 You also made a decision, that is to upgrade the</p> <p>12 No. 3 alarm to a No. 4 alarm; right?</p> <p>13 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: At 15:34 we can see here the report you made.</p> <p>15 You reported to the control centre the state of the fire</p> <p>16 at the various blocks; right?</p> <p>17 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: It reads, in English:</p> <p>19 "Mayday message received by senior station officer</p> <p>20 Hui Kin On. Mayday operation in progress."</p> <p>21 This was the message sent by you at that time?</p> <p>22 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p> <p>23 MR SW LEE: This is in relation to an attempt to rescue</p> <p>24 Mr Ho Wai Ho; right?</p> <p>25 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.</p>	Page 88	<p>1 MR SW LEE: So it covers the incident commander and the</p> <p>2 frontline officers, they all rely on this system to make</p> <p>3 communications, give instructions and receive</p> <p>4 instructions; correct?</p> <p>5 MR LAM HO CHUN: We rely on this system to deploy resources,</p> <p>6 but we do not make use of this system to communicate</p> <p>7 with each other.</p> <p>8 MR SW LEE: From the information supplied to us by the FSD,</p> <p>9 we know that there is a three-level command structure.</p> <p>10 Is this structure invoked when an alarm No. 3 fire</p> <p>11 occurs?</p> <p>12 MR LAM HO CHUN: Correct.</p> <p>13 MR SW LEE: So regarding this three-level command structure,</p> <p>14 how is it different from the ICS? Are they the same</p> <p>15 thing?</p> <p>16 MR LAM HO CHUN: They are the same thing.</p> <p>17 MR SW LEE: When you arrived at the scene, I believe that</p> <p>18 there were already over 200 frontline firefighters at</p> <p>19 the scene; correct?</p> <p>20 MR LAM HO CHUN: I was not sure that there were that many</p> <p>21 firefighters at the scene, but looking back, when</p> <p>22 I arrived at the scene at 15:29, there were not that</p> <p>23 many firefighters there.</p> <p>24 MR SW LEE: Do you know how many people were deployed there</p> <p>25 from the FSD?</p>

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<p>1 MR LAM HO CHUN: If you're talking about the fire alarm</p> <p>2 No. 3, the number of manpower deployed is about 70 to</p> <p>3 80. But I know that we had more firefighters than 70 or</p> <p>4 80 at the scene at that time.</p> <p>5 MR SW LEE: So, as the highest ranking commander at the</p> <p>6 scene, you need to appraise the situation and you need</p> <p>7 to give different directions to different colleagues.</p> <p>8 From my understanding, it seems that you use a single</p> <p>9 communication system to talk to each other. So in terms</p> <p>10 of coordination and communication, did you come across</p> <p>11 any difficulty when you wanted to receive information or</p> <p>12 give instructions?</p> <p>13 MR LAM HO CHUN: Let me explain about the communication</p> <p>14 system. We have RT, radio telephone. We can switch to</p> <p>15 different channels with the radio telephone. There is</p> <p>16 one channel for the fire scene and another channel</p> <p>17 between the fire scene and the control centre. We can</p> <p>18 make use of these two channels to talk to different</p> <p>19 people. So there were not challenges that we could not</p> <p>20 overcome.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: You didn't have the mobile command unit yet.</p> <p>22 MR LAM HO CHUN: It hadn't arrived yet.</p> <p>23 MR SW LEE: The mobile command unit like what we see in the</p> <p>24 movie, there would be a command unit inside the vehicle;</p> <p>25 correct?</p>	<p>1 said that they did not know exactly which building he</p> <p>2 was at.</p> <p>3 I'd just like to clarify that you only learned about</p> <p>4 the identity and location of Mr Ho Wai Ho at</p> <p>5 15:55 hours?</p> <p>6 MR LAM HO CHUN: Correct.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: I have some further questions about the decision</p> <p>8 to upgrade the alarm level. When you arrived at the</p> <p>9 scene, your colleagues reported to you the situation,</p> <p>10 and then in about 10 minutes you made the decision to</p> <p>11 upgrade the alarm to No. 4.</p> <p>12 What factors did you take into account and what</p> <p>13 drove you to upgrade the alarm?</p> <p>14 MR LAM HO CHUN: I can describe the scenario or situation at</p> <p>15 that time. At around 15:29 I arrived at the scene.</p> <p>16 I arrived at the Tai Po Baptist Public School inside</p> <p>17 Wang Fuk Court. I saw a very unprecedented scenario.</p> <p>18 Five of the buildings were on fire. There was facade</p> <p>19 fire at three of the blocks. We saw patches of fire.</p> <p>20 Some of the buildings were completely locked with smoke.</p> <p>21 I ran to Wang Cheong/Wang Tai House. At around the</p> <p>22 roundabout, I was of the impression that there were</p> <p>23 a lot of miscellaneous articles collapsing, there were</p> <p>24 net flying down and there were bamboo sticks coming</p> <p>25 down.</p>
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<p>1 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes.</p> <p>2 MR SW LEE: Regarding this mayday message and the rescue</p> <p>3 operation, when did you learn that the distressed</p> <p>4 officer was Mr Ho Wai Ho?</p> <p>5 MR LAM HO CHUN: At around 15:55. At 15:55, according to --</p> <p>6 as I said in the witness statement, I learned that there</p> <p>7 was a colleague trying to save another colleague at the</p> <p>8 entrance of Wang Fuk Court and at that time I learned</p> <p>9 that the distressed officer was Wai Ho.</p> <p>10 MR SW LEE: This was an unfortunate event. I believe that</p> <p>11 you saw a colleague trying to save an unconscious</p> <p>12 colleague lying on some burning bamboo sticks?</p> <p>13 MR LAM HO CHUN: Correct.</p> <p>14 MR SW LEE: Was it at this time that you learned that the</p> <p>15 distressed colleague was Mr Ho Wai Ho; you only learned</p> <p>16 of his identity or location at that time?</p> <p>17 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes, for me.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: Did anyone report to you that the colleague was</p> <p>19 located at a certain building but no one could reach</p> <p>20 him? Did you receive such a report?</p> <p>21 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes. We knew that the colleague was at the</p> <p>22 30th floor.</p> <p>23 MR SW LEE: But you didn't know which block?</p> <p>24 MR LAM HO CHUN: I couldn't hear which block he was at.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: Your colleagues came to testify earlier and they</p>	<p>1 MR SW LEE: About scaffolding nets flying around, were they</p> <p>2 flying onto the ground or did they fly to some other</p> <p>3 blocks and spread the fire?</p> <p>4 MR LAM HO CHUN: I didn't pay specific attention to that,</p> <p>5 but the two blocks with the biggest fire -- from the</p> <p>6 school I saw Wang Kin House and Wang Sun House were on</p> <p>7 fire and I believe that the fire was spread through</p> <p>8 certain articles.</p> <p>9 MR SW LEE: One of the challenges you faced with the search</p> <p>10 and rescue operation was the faulty fire alarm system in</p> <p>11 most of the buildings. When you took over the post of</p> <p>12 commander, regarding evacuation procedure, can you talk</p> <p>13 about what was being reported to you and can you tell us</p> <p>14 about how you worked on the evacuation of the blocks?</p> <p>15 MR LAM HO CHUN: First of all, Cheung Lok Hang reported to</p> <p>16 me what had been done and what had happened. He</p> <p>17 mentioned that on the ground floor of various blocks</p> <p>18 there were residents evacuating. This was the</p> <p>19 information that I got.</p> <p>20 MR SW LEE: As the incident commander, did you give any</p> <p>21 further instructions in relation to the evacuation?</p> <p>22 MR LAM HO CHUN: On that day, as I said, I went to</p> <p>23 Cheong/Tai to suppress the fire and to handle the mayday</p> <p>24 message from Wai Ho. My colleagues and I divided duties</p> <p>25 among ourselves. He went to work on the Kin/Sun/Tao</p>

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<p>1 Houses' evacuation. There was a coordination mechanism. 2 The Fire Services Department work on suppressing the 3 fire and the police work on cordoning off the scene and 4 the same arrangement was made on the day. 5 MR SW LEE: You explained why you upgraded the alarm to 6 No. 4, and that was because you saw debris falling onto 7 the ground and the fire was fierce. Have you taken into 8 account whether the manpower is one of the factors why 9 you upgraded the alarm? 10 MR LAM HO CHUN: The fire was fierce, it spread very 11 quickly, the scale of the fire was also huge. We 12 received a large number of assistance calls and the 13 number of calls we received kept going up. That was one 14 of the reasons why. I was of the view that I needed 15 more resources and I needed a higher-level incident 16 command system to handle the incident. That's why 17 I upgraded the alarm to No. 4. 18 MR SW LEE: I understand why you may want more resources, 19 you may want more fire appliances, more firefighters. 20 Regarding the higher-level command system that you 21 talked about, what was that? 22 MR LAM HO CHUN: The incident command system, ICS, is to 23 deploy resources to conduct rescue operation and put out 24 the fire. If we upgrade the alarm, then the incident 25 -- well, the rank of the officer taking up the incident</p>	<p>1 guidelines. Take Wang Fuk Court as an example. Out of 2 the eight blocks, six blocks had their FAS not in order 3 and that involved quite a number of residents. 4 According to your understanding, from the training that 5 you've had, from the instructions you've received, what 6 backup plan can be invoked to make up for the faulty 7 fire alarm system? 8 MR LAM HO CHUN: I arrived at the scene, I worked with the 9 police in accordance to established procedures. At 10 Kin/Sun/Tao/Yan, the open ground next to them, we 11 conducted evacuation, we made use of the broadcast 12 system at the police vehicles and we make use of the 13 sirens to evacuate the residents. 14 MR SW LEE: I asked Mr Hui the same question. If not just 15 the light of the fire appliances was on but the siren 16 was on as well, would that help, in your view, or would 17 that be counter-productive? 18 MR LAM HO CHUN: The siren was on when the fire appliance 19 went from the fire station to the scene. We did not 20 turn it off immediately when we arrived at the scene. 21 I think that the siren served as an alarm. When we 22 arrived at the scene, we started working with the police 23 and the police has the broadcasting system and we were 24 of the view that it's better for us to turn down the 25 siren of the fire appliances.</p>
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<p>1 commander will be higher and we can divide the manpower 2 into different sectors. 3 MR SW LEE: So at that time, because of the magnitude of the 4 fire, you were of the view that you were not capable 5 enough to be the commander at the scene? 6 MR LAM HO CHUN: Agreed. 7 MR SW LEE: So you want a higher-ranking officer, your 8 superior, to be at the scene to be the commander; is 9 that correct? 10 MR LAM HO CHUN: Agreed. 11 MR SW LEE: As I said, one of the difficulties of the rescue 12 and evacuation is the faulty fire alarm system. You are 13 a rather high-ranking officer yourself. If at a scene 14 like Wang Fuk Court the fire alarm system for whatever 15 reason is not in order, do you have any firefighting 16 strategies that can give you instructions as to what can 17 be done? Do you have any guidelines on it as to the 18 possible backup plan if the FAS is not in order? 19 MR LAM HO CHUN: No, no such guidelines. I'd like to 20 supplement. As for tools, as for points to note during 21 operations, we would learn about that as we conduct 22 various operations. But if you're talking about a 23 general order, we don't have that to teach us step by 24 step what to do when that happens. 25 MR SW LEE: Set aside the order. You talked about training,</p>	<p>1 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: When you arrived at the 2 scene, were the sirens of the fire appliances on? 3 MR LAM HO CHUN: Mr Chairman, some of the sirens were on at 4 Kwong Wang Street. When I arrived there, the siren was 5 on, but when I got to the EVA, the sirens were off. 6 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So in other words, at 7 different time different fire appliances arrive so there 8 will be sound coming from different appliances? 9 MR LAM HO CHUN: Agreed. 10 MR SW LEE: Two of your colleagues gave their evidence; they 11 said that they came across different challenges at 12 Wang Fuk Court. They talked about the blockage of 13 miscellaneous articles, there were bamboo sticks falling 14 down from the building. You were an incident commander 15 for not that long period of time, but I believe that you 16 did stay behind to help with the rescue operation; 17 correct? 18 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes. 19 MR SW LEE: Apart from the scenarios that I just described, 20 did you come across any difficulties on that day that 21 you can share with us so that we can look into whether 22 there is a need for us to make any improvement? 23 MR LAM HO CHUN: This situation was unprecedentedly 24 difficult. 25 MR SW LEE: I believe that despite the fact that you had</p>

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<p>1 over 80 firefighters, this was nothing easy for you. 2 MR LAM HO CHUN: Well, with regards to the situation at that 3 time, our operation was not easy but all of our 4 colleagues have full understanding of our duties and we 5 know how to act on our own accord. 6 MR SW LEE: I know that you receive assistance calls 7 constantly from 999 to the FS Control Centre. With 8 regards to these assistance calls or calls for 9 assistance, do you have established procedures as to how 10 to handle them? Do you accord different priorities to 11 different cases? 12 MR LAM HO CHUN: We, upon receipt of assistance calls, have 13 the responsibility to rescue the families of the 14 callers. I believe that all the assistance calls came 15 from Wang Cheong House so I directed the firefighters at 16 the scene to clear access to the entrance of the house, 17 to create a clear access, to clear off all the 18 miscellaneous articles, to allow residents to come out 19 and for firefighters to gain entry. 20 MR SW LEE: We've heard the evidence that it was around 4 pm 21 that the first batch of firefighters could get into Wang 22 Cheong House for the firefighting operation or rescue 23 operation. 24 MR LAM HO CHUN: I wasn't sure about the time. 25 MR SW LEE: Chairman, I don't have any other questions.</p>	<p>1 you have to consider when you decide whether to evacuate 2 the residents, speaking from a fireman's perspective? 3 MR LAM HO CHUN: Residents themselves have to take into 4 consideration their health condition to decide whether 5 they should escape. Like my colleague said this 6 morning, according to our knowledge, if you open the 7 door and find that there is smoke, you should 8 immediately close the door under normal circumstances. 9 MR SW LEE: You said if we see smoke we should close the 10 door. Could you explain further, what are the 11 considerations behind, say, a resident has escaped to 12 the staircase and he saw that there was thick smoke, 13 what were the considerations behind for you to recommend 14 the residents to go back to the flat? Could you please 15 explain? 16 MR LAM HO CHUN: If you see dense smoke, it would be hard 17 for you to assess whether the smoke comes from the upper 18 floors or the lower floors. If you are to evacuate at 19 this moment you might be subject to great risks. So 20 under these circumstances it would be more appropriate 21 for you to go back to the flat, close the door and use 22 wet towel to seal the gap. 23 MR JENKIN SUEN: Thank you. 24 MR SW LEE: Chairman, I just want to ride on what Mr Suen 25 asked the witness.</p>
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<p>1 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Other parties? 2 Government counsel Mr Suen. 3 Examination by MR JENKIN SUEN 4 MR JENKIN SUEN: Chairman, I have a question for Mr Lam. 5 Mr Lam, just now Mr Lee asked you if you were to 6 evacuate the residents at the scene were there any 7 guidelines you could follow. You said there were no 8 such orders or relevant guidelines, but you said you had 9 received training or had had relevant experience. Could 10 you share with us what kind of training you had received 11 in this regard? If you were to evacuate the residents 12 at the scene, what factors would you have to take into 13 consideration? Under what circumstances would you think 14 it is appropriate to evacuate the residents? 15 MR LAM HO CHUN: Evacuation involves residents of the 16 housing estate. So there are usually fire drills that 17 involve the residents. We would take note of the number 18 of staircases available as well as the layout of the 19 housing estate. We would take these into consideration 20 when we carry out fire drills. 21 MR SW LEE: Just now your colleagues mentioned this: the 22 fire was huge and there were residents that were trapped 23 at the scene and when they decided whether to evacuate 24 the residents, they had to take into consideration 25 whether there was dense smoke. Could you tell us what</p>	<p>1 Re-examination by MR SW LEE 2 MR SW LEE: Just now I think you were describing a situation 3 where a trapped resident should stay put. You said if 4 there is dense smoke in the building, depending on the 5 situation, one should decide whether to stay in the flat 6 or escape. 7 We understand that during the initial stage of 8 a fire, it might not be very serious and there might be 9 some parts of the building that were not on fire. From 10 your professional perspective, do you think the 11 residents should stay put, that is to stay on the site 12 or leave that building? 13 MR LAM HO CHUN: Under normal circumstances, one should stay 14 in the building. However, in this case, if you look 15 back, I think the residents could have escaped earlier. 16 In fact, most of the residents tried to escape, those in 17 Wang Kin, Wang Sun and Wang Tao. 18 MR SW LEE: I mean, if the fire had not affected the 19 building yet or the fire was not too serious, your 20 recommendation would be to stay in the building rather 21 than leaving the building? 22 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Well, could I put it this 23 way. In the UK there is a stay-put policy that advises 24 people to stay, but this might not be feasible so the 25 FSD did not give the same guidelines or recommendations.</p>

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1 Instead, we ask people to bring the three treasures to
 2 leave the scene. If one sees dense smoke or if one sees
 3 danger, should that person go back to the flat?
 4 MR LAM HO CHUN: Correct.
 5 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So I think it depends on the
 6 situation. If you hear the fire alarm, then you bring
 7 the three treasures with you, then you leave.
 8 MR LAM HO CHUN: I agree.
 9 MR SW LEE: I have no other questions, chairman.
 10 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: I want to ask you a question
 11 but I'm not sure if that's a question for you. When we
 12 went to the site, there were colleagues who explained to
 13 us, that is during a firefighting operation, if you find
 14 someone is inside, you have to be careful because, when
 15 the temperature is high and you deploy water jets, it
 16 might become steam. The water might become steam and
 17 the person might be steamed up. And I read relevant
 18 information from a manual.
 19 Were you worried that there were residents inside
 20 the buildings and that's why during the firefighting
 21 operation you had to make corresponding adjustments?
 22 MR LAM HO CHUN: I agree, chairman.
 23 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: You knew that there were many
 24 people inside the building, so what were your strategies
 25 in spraying water or applying water jets?

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1 MR LAM HO CHUN: Our firefighting strategy was to put out
 2 the fire from the lower floors to the upper floors. If
 3 we were able to establish a clear access and if we were
 4 certain that the fire would not spread again, then
 5 we would continue to move up to the upper floors in our
 6 firefighting operation. That's our strategy in the
 7 incident.
 8 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So you dealt with the lower
 9 floors first?
 10 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes.
 11 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So you wanted to create an
 12 access opening?
 13 MR LAM HO CHUN: Yes, to create an access opening for our
 14 firefighters to keep going. And if we found residents
 15 in the meantime, we had to make sure that there was
 16 a means of escape.
 17 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Well, that was the guideline
 18 you followed, right. Like the fire in Garley Building,
 19 you couldn't go up to try to rescue people but couldn't
 20 come down. You had to make sure that there was clear
 21 access.
 22 MR LAM HO CHUN: Right.
 23 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So you have to make sure that
 24 there is a safe passage without fire.
 25 MR LAM HO CHUN: I agree, chairman.

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1 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: But in this incident, from
 2 outside of the building you could also apply water jets;
 3 you wouldn't have to worry if the residents were inside
 4 the building -- would there be any impact if you deploy
 5 water jets from outside of the building? You kept
 6 applying water jets so you weren't worried that there
 7 were people inside and therefore you had to adjust your
 8 strategy accordingly?
 9 MR LAM HO CHUN: I'll try to answer --
 10 MR SW LEE: In relation to the firefighting strategies, we
 11 understand that another officer of a higher ranking will
 12 give evidence.
 13 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Perhaps I'll save the
 14 question for that officer.
 15 If you have no other questions, I repeat what I said
 16 to your colleagues. Thank you very much for giving
 17 evidence here.
 18 MR LAM HO CHUN: Thank you.
 19 (The witness was released)
 20 (2.50 pm)
 21 MR SW LEE: Chairman, the last witness we have today is then
 22 deputy chief fire officer, Mr Wong King Man.
 23 Yes, Mr Wong, in front of you there is
 24 a declaration. Please stand up and read out the
 25 declaration first.

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1 (2.51 pm)
 2 MR WONG KING MAN (affirmed)
 3 Examination by MR SW LEE
 4 MR SW LEE: Yes. Please be seated.
 5 Mr Wong, starting from this January, you had your
 6 pre-retirement leave; is that right?
 7 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 8 MR SW LEE: During the Wang Fuk Court fire, you were the
 9 deputy chief fire officer; right?
 10 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 11 MR SW LEE: We know that on the day of the fire, at around
 12 3 pm you arrived at the scene and you served as the
 13 incident commander; correct?
 14 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 15 MR SW LEE: For the Committee investigation you provided us
 16 with a witness statement; do you remember?
 17 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 18 MR SW LEE: I believe that the witness statement is true to
 19 your best knowledge and belief; is that right?
 20 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 21 MR SW LEE: I'd like to talk about the rescue operation that
 22 day. At 15:11, you received instructions from the
 23 command centre; is that right?
 24 MR WONG KING MAN: No. I didn't receive the instruction.
 25 At 15:11 it was No. 3 fire alarm. In terms of the

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<p>1 deployment, I didn't have to be at the scene, but my 2 usual practice is that it belongs to my district, so 3 I told the control centre that I would go to the scene. 4 Whenever there is a No. 3 fire alarm I would try to be 5 at the scene as soon as possible. In case the fire has 6 to be upgraded to No. 4, I could take charge 7 immediately. 8 MR SW LEE: At around 15:34 you arrived at the scene. 9 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes. 10 MR SW LEE: After listening to reports on the site, at 15:50 11 you became the incident commander? 12 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes, the incident commander of the No. 4 13 fire alarm. 14 MR SW LEE: And you were the fire officer of the highest 15 rank at the scene? 16 MR WONG KING MAN: Correct. 17 MR SW LEE: At 16:18, the fire alarm had to be upgraded 18 again? 19 MR WONG KING MAN: No. It was still a No. 4 fire alarm. 20 I have to explain this. Deputy fire officer or the 21 chief fire officer had to be in charge and I could be in 22 charge of the No. 4 fire. 23 MR SW LEE: Right. 24 MR WONG KING MAN: Mr Tang Wing Wah arrived at the scene and 25 he said he would take over the commanding task, that is</p>	<p>1 statement, you made a report to the control centre based 2 on your observation at the scene. 3 Let's look at paragraph 8 of your witness statement, 4 it might be easier. That should be WS2/74/1005. This 5 is your witness statement paragraph 8. 6 It says at about 15:39 you observed six buildings 7 ablaze, and you named those six buildings here. For 8 Wang Cheong and Wang Tai House, you used the word "well 9 alight". I believe it means the fire was very fierce. 10 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes, very fierce. 11 MR SW LEE: And also a number of facades were on fire. 12 MR WONG KING MAN: Correct. 13 MR SW LEE: And in this witness statement you said the fire 14 had just spread to Wang Tao House; correct? 15 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes. 16 MR SW LEE: We know that if it is to be upgraded to No. 5 17 fire alarm, Mr Chan at 18:22 upgraded from No. 4 to 18 No. 5. 19 MR WONG KING MAN: Correct. 20 MR SW LEE: My question is, before Mr Tang took over at the 21 scene, what factors did you take into consideration as 22 you decided not to upgrade the fire to a No. 5 fire 23 alarm? 24 MR WONG KING MAN: There are different levels of fire. 25 No. 1 and No. 2 are sort of together. They are special</p>
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<p>1 he would be the commander. So he appointed me to be the 2 rescue officer at that time, to be in charge of the 3 entire rescue operation. 4 MR SW LEE: I'd like to ask you about the post of the rescue 5 officer. Do you mean search and rescue, that is to 6 enter the fire scene? 7 MR WONG KING MAN: We call it SAR, search and rescue, 8 operation. 9 MR SW LEE: So you were responsible for the SAR operation? 10 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes. So my title was rescue officer. 11 MR SW LEE: On the rescue operation, apart from Mr Tang, 12 I believe that you were the fire officer of the highest 13 rank that gives command? 14 MR WONG KING MAN: We call it ICS, incident command system, 15 and Mr Tang was officer of the highest rank, because IC 16 was the office of the highest rank and below IC there 17 were different officers and I was responsible for the 18 rescue operation. There were other colleagues 19 responsible for firefighting. 20 MR SW LEE: Is it what we call the three-level command 21 system? 22 MR WONG KING MAN: It could be a three-level or a four-level 23 system, depending on how you count it. 24 MR SW LEE: Going back to that day, you listened to the 25 report at the scene and, according to your witness</p>	<p>1 risks. And then you have No. 3, No. 4 and No. 5, and 2 there is a transition between the different levels of 3 fire alarms. 4 It would be better if there are more fire appliances 5 but there is a transitional phase. They couldn't come 6 all at once because you cannot control them all. You 7 might end up having many firefighters there so we have 8 to upgrade the fire alarm step by step. 9 The whole process of upgrading lasted for about 10 30 minutes. I will have to take into consideration to 11 make sure that I was able to handle it before I consider 12 escalation because it's a process. It's just like when 13 you dive, just like a crowd is going to enter into this 14 room, it can't be done in one go. 15 MR SW LEE: The chairman has already asked, if there is 16 a large number of appliances arriving at the same time, 17 there might not be sufficient space to house all these 18 vehicles. 19 MR WONG KING MAN: Right. 20 MR SW LEE: I believe that you were also aware of another 21 difficulty, that is the fire alarm system. There is 22 sufficient information, evidence showing that the fire 23 alarm system for six of the blocks had failed. So in 24 relation to your work at the scene, that is your 25 command, what difficulties did you encounter?</p>

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<p>1 MR WONG KING MAN: When I arrived it was about 15:35, SDO 2 Mr Chan Ho Tak, senior divisional officer, he was also 3 in charge of Tai Po Fire Station, he told me that he was 4 liaising with police in terms of evacuation. From my 5 recollection, at that time, several blocks were a blaze 6 starting from the bottom. It would be difficult for 7 residents to evacuate themselves at that point. 8 When it comes to evacuation, there are two 9 definitions. That's my view. First, self-evacuation, 10 that is when you hear the fire alarm, you decide to 11 leave. Whether you decide to leave or not, you bring 12 the three treasures, open the door to see if there is 13 fire. If there is no fire, then you go to the 14 staircase, open the smoke door to see if there's any 15 fire. If the answer is no, then you go down the stairs. 16 If there is smoke, then you need to make a decision to 17 return either to your own flat or a nearer flat that is 18 safe. So it's a series of judgment calls. 19 We have never suggested to residents to go up to the 20 rooftop because there is no way to leave the building 21 from there. So residents will have to make a series of 22 decisions. That's one way. 23 The other form of evacuation is evacuation by 24 firefighters. As to the former way of evacuation, that 25 is residents leaving the buildings themselves, for the</p>	<p>1 MR WONG KING MAN: Fire safety system surely would help. 2 MR SW LEE: FSD is quite concerned about the FSIs. 3 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes, because they do serve a purpose and 4 they work. 5 MR SW LEE: At 16:23, when you took over the command, you 6 took the role as the rescue officer? 7 MR WONG KING MAN: Right. 8 MR SW LEE: Let me give you some figures. We see these 9 figures from the records of the FSD. I'll tell you the 10 figures and then I will ask you questions. 11 At 16:23 on 26 November, the day of the fire, up to 12 16:23 we know that there were 65 calls for assistance, 13 38 from Wang Cheong, 23 from Wang Tai and four from 14 other blocks. That's the information we have. 15 The second batch of information we have is on 16 27 November, that is about 9.35 when you finished your 17 shift? 18 MR WONG KING MAN: Right. 19 MR SW LEE: Up to that point in time you had received 20 311 calls for assistance. 21 The third batch of information we have is that when 22 you took over as the rescue officer, all the way to the 23 evening at around 10 pm, 22:00, in that five or six 24 hours you had only handled 13 calls for assistance. 25 From 10 pm to 4 am the next day, you handled another</p>
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<p>1 first few blocks I would not advise it because it would 2 be more dangerous. When residents open the door, 3 they would see dense smoke. It would be better for them 4 to return to their flats, use tapes to seal the gap. 5 Inside the flat they need to choose a flat with a window 6 that can see the road, and try to signal with us by 7 using, say, towels. It's their decision. But it 8 depends on the situation. 9 But if it is an earlier time, yes, self-evacuation 10 might be possible. But at a later time, say, for 11 example, the first few blocks of Wang Fuk Court, 12 especially Wang Tai and Wang Cheong, the two blocks, 13 there was only a very short time for evacuation. 14 They would need the help of firefighters. 15 MR SW LEE: We know that the fire was developing by stages. 16 Maybe at the beginning there were a couple of blocks 17 that were serious when it comes to the fire, and the 18 later ones, the other ones when there was no fire or 19 when the fire was only small, and the fire safety system 20 was working well, then it would be safer for residents 21 to evacuate themselves. 22 MR WONG KING MAN: That may be possible. 23 MR SW LEE: So in this incident it seems that if the fire 24 alarm system were working or had been working, it would 25 have helped the residents.</p>	<p>1 33 assistance cases. At from 4 am to 9 am, 2 83 assistance cases were dealt with. 3 I'm not criticising you. I just want to know, from 4 27 November in the early morning, the fire was somewhat 5 under control, that's why there were a larger number of 6 assistance cases being handled and you were more 7 successful in your rescue? 8 MR WONG KING MAN: Right. When it comes to rescue, there 9 are four factors. As I've stated in my evidence, the 10 first one was the progress of firefighting. We have to 11 ensure safety in access. We also need to make sure that 12 there is safe egress. The third factor was whether the 13 scene is safe in terms of structural integrity. And the 14 fourth factor is whether the information provided by the 15 caller is clear or not. 16 At the beginning, the first 10 hours or so, it was 17 very difficult for us to enter the scene of the fire. 18 That was a major challenge in our operation. 19 MR SW LEE: You said a little while ago that even with more 20 manpower you might still not be able to enter the scene 21 of the fire to carry out the operation. 22 MR WONG KING MAN: Right. 23 MR SW LEE: The calls for assistance came from residents of 24 various blocks. Using Wang Chi House as an example, it 25 took about an hour or 50 minutes to handle a case, and</p>

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<p>1 the longer ones would take nine hours. That's the same</p> <p>2 for the other blocks. You were the rescue officer on</p> <p>3 that day, when you received calls for assistance from</p> <p>4 different blocks, what were your considerations or were</p> <p>5 there any criteria for you to decide which call to</p> <p>6 handle first?</p> <p>7 MR WONG KING MAN: Using Wang Chi House, it's next to</p> <p>8 Wang Shing House, it was not alight because -- well, at</p> <p>9 that time, I set up a forward command post. Normally,</p> <p>10 this will be in the MCU, mobile command unit. It was</p> <p>11 stationed in an open space outside Wang Chi House. It</p> <p>12 had a direct line of sight of the scene. For Wang Chi</p> <p>13 House, there's a chance that the fire may spread from</p> <p>14 the nearby block. We kept pouring water on Wang Shing</p> <p>15 House. At about 4.30, Wang Chi was the only block</p> <p>16 untouched because of the colleagues trying to stop the</p> <p>17 fire at Wang Shing House. There is the ICS, the</p> <p>18 incident command system. Under 2, there were sector</p> <p>19 officers. There were fewer at the beginning. Of course</p> <p>20 ideally there will be one for each block.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: What do they do?</p> <p>22 MR WONG KING MAN: So they will be divisional officer rank</p> <p>23 or above, and if the fire is not serious, it may be just</p> <p>24 an ADO. In short, the scene would be divided into</p> <p>25 different zones or sectors. Each sector is in charge of</p>	<p>1 and then the structure developed. I don't have the</p> <p>2 information at hand. I think I've already handed it to</p> <p>3 you. At about 5 or 6, I don't have the information at</p> <p>4 hand, but from my recollection it was swift. At about</p> <p>5 6.00 or so it was done. That is there is one officer</p> <p>6 for each block.</p> <p>7 MR SW LEE: Let's see if we can find the information. We</p> <p>8 heard about the ICS. You're talking about 16:35?</p> <p>9 MR WONG KING MAN: 16:35 is the time I took over as the</p> <p>10 rescue officer, so it should be earlier.</p> <p>11 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: So a sector is for one</p> <p>12 building and it was set up step by step, but there was</p> <p>13 a decision at 16:35 that each block would have an</p> <p>14 officer.</p> <p>15 MR WONG KING MAN: Could you please scroll up. Here.</p> <p>16 16:35, the deputy director made a decision. Senior</p> <p>17 officer means divisional officer or above, that is SDO.</p> <p>18 MR SW LEE: So at 16:35, you are referring to the message</p> <p>19 that says "Chan, Derek Armstrong"?</p> <p>20 MR WONG KING MAN: Right.</p> <p>21 MR SW LEE: When it was upgraded No. 4, alarm 4, as Mr Lam</p> <p>22 said, a high-ranking officer would be the commander. So</p> <p>23 as the alarm was upgraded, the ICS was triggered.</p> <p>24 MR WONG KING MAN: There was the ICS at the very beginning.</p> <p>25 There was one for different level.</p>
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<p>1 each sector, say one is in charge of Wang Chi,</p> <p>2 Wang Cheong, and one is in charge of rescue, one is in</p> <p>3 charge of firefighting. The one under rescue will be</p> <p>4 under my command. There is a sector officer for each</p> <p>5 block. I will stay in close liaison with the officer.</p> <p>6 When we receive calls for assistance, we may hand them</p> <p>7 to the sector officer or hand them to sector officer via</p> <p>8 me. There will be different ways when it comes to</p> <p>9 rescue. But it depends on the progress of the</p> <p>10 firefighting.</p> <p>11 MR SW LEE: So using Wang Chi House as an example, it's the</p> <p>12 least affected. Your strategy was that since it was</p> <p>13 more or less untouched, so you would conduct a rescue</p> <p>14 operation first or, because of that reason, you would</p> <p>15 devote resources to rescue other blocks first?</p> <p>16 MR WONG KING MAN: You are talking about priority?</p> <p>17 MR SW LEE: Yes. Priority.</p> <p>18 MR WONG KING MAN: Wang Chi, we did not deploy as much</p> <p>19 resources/manpower to Wang Chi House, because it's</p> <p>20 somewhat untouched.</p> <p>21 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: How long after you arrived at</p> <p>22 the scene or at what time would there be a command</p> <p>23 structure so that one officer would be in charge of one</p> <p>24 block?</p> <p>25 MR WONG KING MAN: At 16:35 there was an ADO, Chow Chi Ho,</p>	<p>1 MR SW LEE: We were talking about calls for assistance.</p> <p>2 When our team was analysing the calls for assistance we</p> <p>3 found that there were different means. One was a call</p> <p>4 to 999. It seems that some calls were made via fax.</p> <p>5 Did you receive any messages? I just want to know if</p> <p>6 you knew from where the faxes came.</p> <p>7 MR WONG KING MAN: The control centre would not tell us the</p> <p>8 means of the communication. They would only tell us the</p> <p>9 unit, the flat number. That's the information we had.</p> <p>10 That is in relation to the information received by</p> <p>11 frontline staff.</p> <p>12 MR SW LEE: So in relation to the directors' command post,</p> <p>13 it means that they have received information or calls,</p> <p>14 hence they issued instructions.</p> <p>15 MR WONG KING MAN: Right.</p> <p>16 MR SW LEE: I would like to ask about guidelines relating to</p> <p>17 the search and rescue team, SAR. The general protocol</p> <p>18 is to have two teams. A1 will go to the rooftop and B1</p> <p>19 is to go to the unit for rescue. That is basically the</p> <p>20 guideline; right?</p> <p>21 MR WONG KING MAN: That is for a general fire. Stage 1, the</p> <p>22 initial stage, will be to go to the unit in question,</p> <p>23 that is A1 and B1. The sequence is to go to the unit in</p> <p>24 question.</p> <p>25 MR SW LEE: But there will be two teams.</p>

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1 MR WONG KING MAN: The other team will go to the rooftop.
 2 The reason for going to the rooftop is to open the door
 3 because the smoke may go up. The fire may go up first
 4 to the very top like a mushroom, in the shape of
 5 a mushroom. That's why there are two teams. But there
 6 are later stages. And then there is firefighting at
 7 lower floors and then rescue on each floor. That is for
 8 a general fire.
 9 MR SW LEE: We know for the fire at Wang Fuk Court, we've
 10 heard more than once it's of a magnitude that is
 11 unprecedented.
 12 MR WONG KING MAN: Right.
 13 MR SW LEE: In the rescue operation, as you were the rescue
 14 officer, did you make adjustments to the guideline or
 15 issue further directions to the frontline officers?
 16 MR WONG KING MAN: The guidelines that I just mentioned was
 17 for general fire. But for Wang Cheong/Wang Tai House,
 18 the fire engulfed the entire two blocks so we could not
 19 invoke the guidelines that I mentioned just now. All we
 20 could do was to come up with a plan with the
 21 firefighting officers. Because we could not put out the
 22 fire, we could not send firefighters there.
 23 MR SW LEE: I believe that you tried to control the fire
 24 from the vicinity because you could not gain access to
 25 many of the blocks. You were trying to clear an access

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1 to the fire scene. You were trying to control the fire
 2 from the facade.
 3 MR WONG KING MAN: We have internal firefighting, we have
 4 external firefighting. For high-rise buildings we focus
 5 on internal firefighting. We form a water tower to put
 6 out fire from the facade. We try to aim water jets to
 7 the facade of the blocks.
 8 MR SW LEE: At 16:23 you took on the role as rescue officer,
 9 at 16:23 were there any rescue officers that could
 10 access Wang Cheong House or was that infeasible at that
 11 time?
 12 MR WONG KING MAN: We tried our best to gain entry into the
 13 blocks. Things were difficult at the outset. We tried
 14 to apply water jets to the blocks, but it was difficult.
 15 MR SW LEE: As far as you remember, do you have any
 16 information or do you remember when the first batch of
 17 firefighters were able to gain access into Wang Cheong
 18 House?
 19 MR WONG KING MAN: I did leave behind a message. You can
 20 look at the log on the screen.
 21 MR SW LEE: At 16:23 you took over the role as the rescue
 22 officer. Let's scroll down very quickly.
 23 MR WONG KING MAN: I will note who I rescued, when I did it
 24 in this log. 16:23, it was there.
 25 MR SW LEE: 16:26, assistance requested by someone at Wang

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1 Cheong House. The SAR team was notified.
 2 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 3 MR SW LEE: Because you are the rescue officer, we'd just
 4 like to paint a picture as to when the FSD was able to
 5 gain access into Wang Cheong House.
 6 MR WONG KING MAN: At 17:00, my first message.
 7 MR SW LEE: Here at 17:00, that's from Mr Wong, you, you
 8 said that you saw two males and one female.
 9 MR WONG KING MAN: That was before 17:00. Because after my
 10 colleagues made the rescue, he would inform me, and
 11 I note that down afterwards.
 12 MR SW LEE: But I believe that was shortly after the rescue,
 13 maybe some dozen minutes earlier they handled the
 14 injured persons and they would report it to you and
 15 I believe that within 10-odd minutes they would make
 16 a report to you; correct?
 17 MR WONG KING MAN: Yes.
 18 MR SW LEE: From this fire incident, we know that in terms
 19 of the magnitude in terms of the casualties, it is
 20 unprecedented. Sadly, many passed away, including your
 21 colleague.
 22 You have been working at the FSD for so many years.
 23 In terms of equipment and strategy, if we were to
 24 conduct a review so that we can do better in the future,
 25 is there anything that can be improved on that you'd

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1 like to share with us?
 2 MR WONG KING MAN: Now, regarding our equipment, I believe
 3 that ours, in terms of the world of firefighting teams,
 4 are topnotch. We have new technology, we have robotics,
 5 we have drones. We see many drones online that can
 6 eject water but they can only be flown at very low
 7 height and the water pressure from these drones is not
 8 strong. We use the hose of such a thickness and the
 9 drones will not be able to carry a hose of such a
 10 weight, of such a diameter to put out fire or eject
 11 water of a certain level of pressure.
 12 Of course we need to catch up with the new
 13 technology, but I think that fire prevention is
 14 important. We always say prevention is better than
 15 cure. Fire prevention always prevail.
 16 MR SW LEE: Chairman, I have no further questions.
 17 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Other involved parties?
 18 Counsel Suen.
 19 Examination by MR JENKIN SUEN
 20 MR JENKIN SUEN: Mr Wong, I have some questions. We just
 21 talked about SAR team, search and rescue team at Wang
 22 Cheong House -- well, when did you first gain access to
 23 Wang Cheong House for search and rescue operation.
 24 First I'd like to refer you to B10, page 5151. At
 25 page 5151, 16:56, the second entry, here we see

<p>Page 121</p> <p>1 a message that reads: "From rescue officer", that is 2 you, "a female body was seen." So at that time a 3 colleague had gained entry into Wang Cheong House? 4 MR WONG KING MAN: Agreed. Sorry, just now I scrolled down 5 to 17:00 directly. Actually, at 16:56, someone was able 6 to gain entry into Wang Cheong House. 7 MR JENKIN SUEN: Let's look at page 5142. Here we're not 8 referring to Wang Cheong House but Wang Tai House. We 9 understand that the fire was the most serious at 10 Wang Tai House. At 4.30 pm there is a message that says 11 a man was rescued at the ground floor of Wang Tai House. 12 So at what time did the firefighters first gain access 13 to Wang Tai House, or do you need more information? 14 MR WONG KING MAN: We were able to gain entry into the 15 ground floor of Wang Tai House earlier. We may have 16 different understanding. What we mean by gaining entry 17 is going to the upper floors. But if we're talking 18 about ground floor, that's not gaining entry, in our 19 understanding. 20 MR JENKIN SUEN: Just now, when Counsel Lee asked you about 21 firefighting, you said that you focus on internal 22 firefighting and you also mentioned external 23 firefighting. You said that you make use of water tower 24 to put out fire from the external wall of the blocks. 25 Chairman asked other colleagues from the FSD about</p>	<p>Page 123</p> <p>1 Do you have anything to say? 2 MR WONG KING MAN: Here I'd like to say something to the 3 residents of Wang Fuk Court. The difficult times will 4 be over in no time. The community, including myself and 5 my family, supports residents of Wang Fuk Court. God 6 bless them. I hope that they will overcome their 7 difficulties very soon. Tomorrow will be a better day. 8 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: Thank you for your words of 9 encouragement. Thank you, Mr Wong, for coming to give 10 your testimony. 11 (The witness was released) 12 (3.32 pm) 13 MR VICTOR DAWES: Chairman, no other witness today. Let's 14 resume on Wednesday. 15 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: 10 am on Wednesday. That 16 concludes our evidential hearing. 17 (3.33 pm) 18 (The hearing adjourned until 10.00 am 19 on Wednesday, 15 April 2026) 20 21 22 23 24 25</p>
<p>Page 122</p> <p>1 steam. Can you explain more about this? That is, if 2 you are to apply water jet from the exterior wall into 3 the units, is there any risk arising from the steam? 4 MR WONG KING MAN: The water pressure of the turntable 5 ladder is higher than the portable pumps held by the 6 firefighters, so the water pressure is great. When we 7 apply the water jet from the external environment, the 8 control is at the bottom of the vehicle. We would not 9 know about the conditions at the block or the interior 10 environment. If we are inside the buildings, of course 11 we would learn about the conditions inside the flats. 12 When we apply water jet to metal that are burning, 13 the temperature can be as high as 1,700 times. It's 14 like a cooked iron. For the guidelines on turntable 15 ladder, if we are to apply water jets, we have to 16 communicate with the firefighters inside the building 17 because there is risk arising from applying water jet 18 from the outside into the units of the blocks because if 19 there are firefighters inside the block, they could be 20 injured. They could sustain fire injury so we have to 21 coordinate with the firefighters that are inside the 22 building. 23 MR JENKIN SUEN: No further questions. 24 THE HON MR JUSTICE DAVID LOK: I will repeat what I just 25 said. Thank you for coming to give your evidence today.</p>	