

# POLICE GENERAL ORDERS

## CHAPTER 25

### ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

#### Definitions

'A Major Disaster' for planning purposes is defined as:-

A serious disruption of life with little or no warning, causing or threatening death or injury to numbers of people, in excess of that which can be dealt with by the public services operating under normal conditions, and requiring the special mobilization and organization of these services.

This definition does not stipulate what numbers constitute an incident which cannot be dealt with by the public services in the normal run of events. However, in the context of police planning, the circumstances would make it apparent that the commitment is beyond District and Regional resources.

#### 25-04 Disasters - Action by Regional Duty Controllers

When a report is received at an RCCC of a fire, house collapse, flood, landslide or other disaster the Duty Controller shall ensure that the Emergency Unit is directed to the scene as necessary. He shall cause the following persons/agencies to be informed:-

- (a) the Fire Services regarding:-
  - (i) a fire;
  - (ii) casualties; and
  - (iii) persons trapped in buildings or under debris;
- (b) the DO of the station concerned;
- (c) the A & E Department of concerned hospital(s) (this is the first contact point for alerting the Hospital Authority of a disaster or major incident); 2/00
- (d) the RC, the DRC, SSP Crime, SSP Traffic, SP EU and PTU Company Commander of the Region if necessary;
- (e) the Highways Department regarding a road blockage;
- (f) the Regional Chief Transport Officer, Transport Department regarding blockage to a major road or public transport link (e.g. MTR, LRT); 02/08
- (g) the Buildings and Lands Department, regarding the collapse of a private building in Hong Kong Island or Kowloon Districts;

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- (h) the District Officer regarding the collapse of a private building in the NT;
- (i) the Architectural Services Department, regarding the collapse of a Government building;
- (j) the Urban/Regional Services Disinfecting Station regarding the removal of dead bodies;
- (k) the nearest District Social Welfare Officer to the scene if emergency relief for victims is required. Outside office hours, the appropriate SWD Duty Officer should be contacted;
- (l) the Water Supplies Department regarding any disaster which necessitates the water supply being turned off; and
- (m) the Policy Duty Officer, HQCCC.

2. To enable the Duty Controller to carry out these duties efficiently the SSP OPS Region will ensure that an up-to-date list of the various officials, their addresses and telephone numbers is maintained in each RCCC.

#### 25-11 Fires

Where the origin of any fire is unknown or suspicious, or in all cases of fire with loss of life, the DC or DVC as appropriate shall appoint a criminal investigation team to investigate.

2. The Crime Formation Officer in charge of the investigation shall contact the Government Laboratory, Forensic Science Division, requesting the attendance of a Government Chemist at a fire of unknown or suspicious origin, or at any fire with loss of life. The Reserve Government Chemist can be contacted through HQ CCC. Other than in exceptional circumstances, e.g. corpses in the fire site, Government Chemists will only enter a fire scene during daylight and after the fire has been completely extinguished.

3. Whether or not it is decided to exercise the powers in section 2 of Cap. 12, the DVC will ensure that adequate measures are taken to preserve any potential evidence at the fire scene until the police investigation team and/or the Government Chemist have completed their examination of the scene and removed any fire debris needed for further investigation.

4. While premises are under Police guard, no person shall be allowed to enter except a member of:-

- (a) the Fire Services Department (FSD) on duty;
- (b) the Building and Lands Department on duty;
- (c) the Architectural Services Department on duty;

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- (d) the Urban Services Department or Regional Services Department on duty; and
- (e) an accredited representative of an insurance company with the written authority of the DVC (the DC/DDC where the DVC is not a Superintendent), or in the company of a responsible police officer; or
- (f) engineers from public utilities, when necessary and under close escort of a police officer.

5. No goods, other than items required as exhibits relating to the investigation of the fire, shall be removed from premises under Police guard without the written authority of a Magistrate.

6. Where a fire site has been placed under Police guard in accordance with section 2 of Cap. 12, the DVC or other investigating police officer shall submit a fire report (Pol. 67), through his DC, to a Magistrate as soon as possible. Irrespective of whether or not a criminal offence is detected or suspected, if the retention of premises is no longer considered necessary an application should be made to a Magistrate to release the premises under section 6A of Cap. 12.

**25-12 Occupational Accidents**

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A Duty Officer shall inform the Labour Department by telephone at the earliest opportunity via its hotline during office hours or mobile phones/pages outside office hours whenever he receives a report concerning any of the following incidents occurring in a workplaces including factories, workshops, industrial undertakings, construction sites and other places as defined in the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance:-

- (a) bursting of a revolving vessel, wheel, grindstone or grinding wheel moved by mechanical power;
- (b) collapse or failure of a crane, derrick, winch, hoist or other appliance used in raising or lowering persons or goods or any part thereof or the overturning of a crane;
- (c) explosion or fire causing damage to the structure of any room or place in which persons are employed, or to any machine or plant contained therein and resulting in the complete suspension of ordinary work in such room or place;
- (d) electrical short circuit or failure of electrical machinery, plant or apparatus, attended by explosion or fire or causing structural damage thereto, and involving its stoppage or disuse;

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- (e) explosion of a receiver or container used for the storage at a pressure greater than atmospheric pressure of any gas or gases (including air) or any liquid or solid resulting from the compression of gas;
  - (f) collapse in whole or part from any cause whatsoever of any roof, wall, floor, structure or foundation forming part of the premises of an industrial undertaking in which persons are employed;
  - (g) person falling from significant height, falling of objects from height, detachment of loads under suspension from cranes, etc; and
  - (h) serious work-related (both industrial and non-industrial but excluding traffic accidents and criminal cases) accidents that result in fatality or serious bodily injuries.
2. A work-related accident is an accident which occurs to a person who is under employment at a workplace but does not include any case where the person is:
- (a) aboard an aircraft or vessel when located in a public place;
  - (b) on the seat or position normally occupied by the driver of a vehicle that is designed or used for the carriage of people, animals or goods and where the vehicle is located in a public place;
  - (c) a domestic helper; or
  - (d) self-employed.
3. In a serious work-related accident, serious bodily injuries include:
- (a) injuries sustained by a person admitted to hospital in shock (including electric shock) or unconscious state;
  - (b) extensive burns or scalds of the body (40%);
  - (c) fractured spine with neurological involvement;
  - (d) amputation of hand or leg;
  - (e) severe eye injuries;
  - (f) any fracture of bones (other than fingers, thumbs and toes);
  - (g) asphyxiation or poisoning caused by exposure to suspected gases, chemicals or biological agents; and
  - (h) any other injuries leading to hypothermia or heat induced illness requiring admission to hospital.

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4. In all the above cases reported to Labour Department, Police shall ensure that any plant, machinery, apparatus or other equipment which may have contributed to the incident/accident is not moved or disturbed until an investigation has been conducted by an Occupational Safety Officer of Labour Department. This shall not apply in a case where further damage to life or property would result if such equipment were not moved.

**25-15 Leakage of Gas or Chemicals**

Whenever a police officer receives a report of leakage of gas or inflammable vapour he shall immediately inform the appropriate RCCC by the quickest possible means, subject to paragraph 2 below. The Duty Controller shall pass particulars to the Fire Services Communication Centre.

2. An officer attending the scene shall switch off his telecommunication equipments such as beat radio, FMRT and pager, before entering 50 meters range of the vicinity of the incident. Any communications with RCCC/police station should be done through a fixed telephone line from location away from the scene of such incident until it is safe to do so. 10/03

3. Under no circumstances shall any electrical appliances be switched either ON or OFF within the vicinity of the leakage. This includes light switches, extractor fans and torches. No naked flame shall be allowed near the incident and no person permitted to smoke.

**25-23 Despatch of Sick and Injured to Hospital**

When an unconscious person is escorted to hospital for medical treatment, without the presence of any relatives or friends, the escorting officer shall search the unconscious person for any document which could help to locate the relatives or friends of that person. If identity is established the relatives or friends shall be informed as soon as possible.

2. Where the identity of an unconscious person cannot immediately be established, the escorting officer shall inform the DO of the relevant police station giving as much information as possible about the unidentified person. The DO shall circulate an appropriate PEN message to all with a view to informing any person enquiring about the sick person concerned to contact the originating Division. RMPUs shall maintain lists of such unidentified persons. Upon subsequent identification a PEN message announcing identification, and cancelling the original, shall be circulated.

3. Until an identification is made, the originating Formation shall remain responsible for establishing his/her identity and informing relatives or friends. Should an unconscious and unidentified person subsequently die, further action shall be undertaken in accordance with PGO/FPM Chapter 38.