

[CE asks departments to take follow-up actions in aftermath of Yau Ma Tei fatal fire incident \(with photos\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, together with the Director of Fire Services, Mr Joseph Leung; the Director of Buildings, Mr Yu Tak-cheung; and the District Officer (Yau Tsim Mong), Mr Edward Yu, this morning (November 16) inspected the scene of the fatal fire incident on Canton Road, Yau Ma Tei, last night. Mrs Lam instructed relevant departments to take follow-up actions.

The fire incident last night has caused seven deaths so far. Ten people are still hospitalised, with seven in critical condition and one in serious condition.

"I am deeply saddened by the heavy casualties and loss of lives caused by the fire. I extend my deepest condolences to the injured and the families of the deceased. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD) will render all necessary assistance to them," Mrs Lam said.

The Yau Tsim Mong District Office set up two inter-departmental help desks at Kwong Wah Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital last night and opened the Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre to serve as a temporary shelter. The relevant organisation was requested to open the Yau Tsim Mong Multicultural Activity Centre to provide assistance and temporary accommodation for residents in need. Ethnic minority representatives and social workers were also arranged to attend the scene immediately to comfort and provide support and assistance to families of the victims. As the deceased and injured are ethnic minorities, the HAD will learn about their needs through organisations dedicated to providing support services for ethnic minorities, and will arrange appropriate counselling services. The Yau Tsim Mong District Office will provide assistance to families of the deceased and injured in their applications for the Emergency Relief Fund or the Special Aid Fund, as well as liaise on behalf of them with various assistance funds operated by other charitable organisations.

Medical social workers of the SWD at related hospitals have proactively contacted family members of the deceased and the injured last night to render emotional support and other necessary assistance. Caseworkers of the concerned Integrated Family Service Centre of the district will also reach out to the affected residents to provide necessary welfare services and assistance.

The unit in which the fire broke out is located at an older single staircase residential building. According to the records of the Fire Services Department (FSD), the unit is not a licensed restaurant or other licensed premises. The FSD has already set up a dedicated investigation team to probe the cause of the fire and the related severe casualties. The Buildings

Department (BD) will work with the dedicated investigation team. It has confirmed, after an inspection, that the overall structure of the building is safe.

"The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government attaches great importance to fire safety in buildings, in particular those aged buildings with fire safety facilities not up to the current standard. We hope to enhance fire safety in buildings and improve the living environment of residents through urban renewal and building rehabilitation. At the same time, the FSD and the BD will inspect old buildings to request property owners or occupants to rectify irregularities, providing necessary assistance in the process," Mrs Lam said.

"In light of the risks exposed by this fire accident, I have asked the FSD and the BD to further step up inspections to eliminate serious fire safety threats to safeguard people's lives and property," she added.

The FSD and the BD will embark on a special exercise with a target to complete the inspection of some 2 500 domestic or composite buildings (excluding those occupied by single families) that are of comparable age (namely, aged 60 or above) by the end of this year. They will pay special attention to the condition of the buildings' common means of escapes and if there are fire hazards. The FSD and BD will, depending on the inspection findings as well as information and evidence gathered, take appropriate enforcement actions according to the relevant legislation against contraventions as soon as practicable. These include instigating prosecution against offenders to safeguard fire and building safety. In addition, the FSD will take the initiative to reach out to local ethnic minorities and relevant groups to learn more about their gathering places where religious and cultural activities are held. The FSD will conduct fire safety inspections in these places and enhance these people's knowledge on fire safety, such as fire prevention and actions to be taken in the event of a fire.



