

香港特別行政區政府  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

政府總部  
環境運輸及工務局  
香港花園道美利大廈



Environment, Transport  
and Works Bureau  
Government Secretariat  
Murray Building, Garden Road,  
Hong Kong

Ref. : ETWB(W)600/93/01  
Group : 10

8 December 2005

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau  
Technical Circular (Works) No. 20/2005

Upward Reporting of Major Emergency Incidents  
from Works Departments

Scope

This Circular sets out the procedures for upward reporting of **major emergency incidents** from Works Departments (WDs) to the Works Branch (WB) of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (ETWB).

Effective Date

2. This Circular takes immediate effect.

Effect on Existing Circulars

3. This Circular supersedes ETWB Technical Circular (Works) No. 15/2004, and should be read in conjunction with -
- (a) ETWB General Circular No. 2/2005 on Crisis Management; and
  - (b) Works Branch Technical Circular No. 9/98 on Natural Disaster Emergency Organisation.

## Background

4. WDs are frontline departments to provide assistance in saving of life and protection of property during emergency situations. They are expected to carry out all necessary emergency works on the spot and permanent recovery measures upon the occurrence of the emergency incidents within their areas of expertise and responsibility. They are required to establish and maintain effective emergency set-ups or organisations to deal with emergency incidents.

## Classification of Major Emergency Incidents

5. Major emergency incidents, which may occur during or outside office hours, are classified into two categories based on the following fundamental criteria:

- (a) whether or not the incident is a crisis, and
- (b) whether or not the incident will likely develop into a crisis.

6. A **Category 1** emergency incident is one which is itself a crisis when it occurs. A **Category 2** emergency incident refers to one which is not a crisis itself but will likely develop into a crisis. WDs should exercise their judgement sensibly as to which major incidents should be classified as Category 1 or Category 2.

## Determination of a Crisis

7. A crisis usually has one or more of the following characteristics or consequential implications:

- (a) widespread media interest;
- (b) overwhelming public concern and political sensitivity;
- (c) significant traffic impact;
- (d) serious effect on members of the public or public facilities (including the need to evacuate a large number of building occupants); and/or
- (e) fatality<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Fatality and serious injury caused by construction accidents should be reported in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Construction Site Safety Manual. In case construction accidents are likely to develop or have developed into crises, they should be reported as Category 1 or Category 2 emergency incidents as appropriate.

The above list may not be exhaustive. For illustration, examples that have the characteristics of a crisis are included in **Appendix A**.

8. To determine whether an emergency incident is a crisis when it occurs or will likely develop into a crisis, a dual assessment approach should be adopted by the Co-ordinating Officer<sup>2</sup> as follows:

(a) Technical assessment

The Co-ordinating Officer should conduct a quick technical assessment on the emergency works to provide urgent relief in response to the emergency incident. The Co-ordinating Officer should take the initiative to liaise with relevant departments and evaluate the scope of the emergency works, including the time for completion and for resumption of traffic flow as appropriate.

(b) Public relations (PR) impact assessment

In parallel, the Co-ordinating Officer should arrange and coordinate a PR impact assessment. He should consult the departmental PR unit to analyse the level of media interest, public reactions/complaints as well as political sensitivity.

9. The Co-ordinating Officer, in consultation with the departmental PR unit, will then evaluate the outcome of his technical and PR impact assessments, and determine whether the emergency incident should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Radar (DR), i.e. the senior officer at Deputy Director level designated under ETWB General Circular No. 2/2005 on Crisis Management.

10. The Co-ordinating Officer should maintain close communication with all interested parties and play a proactive role to alert the DR to any potential emergency incidents that will likely develop into crises. Based on the outcome of the technical and PR impact assessments, the DR should examine the emergency incident in a holistic manner and in his judgement alert the appropriate level of officials in WB.

## **The Upward Reporting Procedures**

11. Under ETWB General Circular No. 2/2005 on Crisis Management, the DR is to identify issues at departmental level that may become crises and to alert WB

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<sup>2</sup> The Co-ordinating Officer should be an officer at DI level or above.

as soon as possible. The DR is required to report any issue that may likely develop into a crisis to the Incident Screening Committee (ISC) of WB, to be chaired by DS(W)1 and attended by DS(W)2. The ISC would screen and analyse early warnings and decide whether the issues should be escalated for further action. The ISC would determine if it is necessary for WB to intervene and coordinate the information dissemination and/or emergency works requiring the joint efforts of WDs involved.

12. The DR is responsible for ensuring that the emergency incidents reporting procedures outlined below are followed:

- (a) For **Category 1** incidents, the DR shall immediately alert DS(W)1 by phone, to be followed by incident reports on the same day. Regular updates of the situation reports should be provided at 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. each working day, or at 9:30 a.m. only on Saturdays, until the incidents become stable and under control. More frequent update of the situation reports may be necessary depending on the sensitivity of the incidents.
- (b) For **Category 2** incidents, the DR shall alert DS(W)1 by phone as soon as possible, to be followed by incident reports on the same day or before 9:30 a.m. on the next working day if the incidents occur outside office hours. Regular updates of the situation reports should be provided before 9:30 a.m. each working day until the incidents become stable and under control. More frequent reporting may be necessary depending on the sensitivity of the incidents.

Incident reports should be sent to DS(W)1 via fax<sup>2</sup> or email with copies to PSW, DS(W)2, AA/SETW, PAS(W)1, Press Secretary, SPO(ETW) and AS(TS)2, using the proforma in **Appendix B**, which should be supplemented by the PR impact assessment report form in **Appendix C** or other reports/separate sheets as necessary. WDs may modify the proforma to suit different reporting needs.

### **Emergency Incidents with Traffic Impact**

13. For emergency incidents that affect traffic flow, WDs should in addition follow the procedures set out in the Handbook on Handling of Emergency Traffic and Transport Incidents issued by Transport Department (TD) wherever appropriate. The responsible WD should take the first opportunity to alert TD's Emergency Transport

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<sup>2</sup> An updated list of relevant contact telephone and fax numbers as well as email addresses will be separately sent to the DRs on a regular basis.

Coordination Centre (ETCC), which is manned round the clock to receive reports on emergency traffic and transport incidents. In particular, the responsible WD should inform ETCC of the details and estimated time required for emergency works. ETCC will decide the appropriate tier of response it should adopt depending on the severity of incidents. If necessary, ETCC will trigger the upward reporting procedure to Transport Branch (TB) and SETW as appropriate. For emergency incidents with traffic impact, TB would determine whether the issues should be reported to SETW through the established mechanism, and WB may not need to duplicate the reporting efforts. The responsible WDs should carry out the emergency works quickly and safely and be responsible for handling public enquiries relating to the works. Depending on the classification and the scale of emergency incidents, the responsible WDs should consider the need to initiate, co-ordinate and reach agreement with relevant departments on a common set of lines-to-take before any PR actions concerning an inter-departmental issue would be taken.

14. WDs should consult ETCC for advice relating to the impact on traffic flow arising from all emergency works affecting carriageways. The tiered ETCC operation mode will enable suitable temporary arrangements or diversions be promptly made to mitigate the traffic impact, including timely public announcements over the radio or TV to alert commuters and motorists. This is crucial when the time of recovery is likely to straddle into or beyond the peak-hour periods. ETCC, with the help of CCTV system on the road network, would assess the aggregate effects of multiple incidents that may be occurring in the same area and provide feedback to the Co-ordinating Officer on the possible traffic impact of the emergency works being carried out. The Co-ordinating Officer should then make the necessary adjustment to the sequence and programme of the emergency works accordingly to minimise the traffic impact wherever practicable, including relief measures such as temporary decking to avoid major traffic disruptions during peak hours. The Co-ordinating Officer should maintain close communication with the DR on the traffic impact in addition to the technical and PR impact assessments.

### **Major Emergency Incidents involving more than One WD**

15. When an incident involves more than one WD, the lead department shall, with assistance from other supporting departments, coordinate the information and be responsible for upward reporting to ETWB. The responsibilities for emergency works among WDs should follow the established practice under various technical circulars in force. In the interest of time, the WD that first arrives at the scene shall take up the co-ordinating role in the first instance until the lead department is identified and takes over control. Unless agreed otherwise, the lead department shall, in default, be determined with the broad guidelines set out in **Appendix D**.

16. The supporting departments should be helpful and promptly provide the lead department with the necessary information and/or decisions to enable the lead department to make timely upward reporting.

17. During emergency situations, the emergency set-ups or organisation of WDs should operate automatically according to their own emergency contingency plans and should be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with each other as well as with other emergency frontline departments. To shorten the response time and achieve better coordination, WDs involved frequently in handling emergency incidents (e.g. CEDD(GEO), DSD, HyD and WSD) should strengthen inter-departmental liaison in their contingency plans through speedy sharing of information and early alert of potentially controversial issues. Isolated incidents with minor impacts, when aggregated together may turn into a major crisis. This is especially crucial during the time of emergency, for example, when there are a series of incidents (multiple incidents) involving flooding, landslide, road incidents and mainbursts occurring within the same period of time or when there are interface problems amongst departments.

18. When there are interface problems or multiple incidents, the Co-ordinating Officer of the lead department should trigger the horizontal communication across departments so that collaboration and coordination at the working level can be achieved and the incidents could be responded without undue delay. In case there are issues that are difficult to resolve, the DRs of relevant departments concerned should maintain direct communication to arrive at prompt decisions or resolutions. The DR of the lead department is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the incidents are timely reported to WB in a co-ordinated manner.

### **Departments' Contingency Plan, Training and Drill**

19. To achieve the aim of this Circular, WDs are required to incorporate the necessary procedures above into their contingency plans. This Circular and relevant departmental circulars should be re-circulated on a regular basis. In addition, the WDs should ensure that regular staff training be provided and drills conducted to ensure the following:

- (a) close communication among DR, Co-ordinating Officers and frontline staff within the department;
- (b) enhanced awareness of frontline staff on the consequential effects of an incident;

- (c) preparedness and responsiveness to emergency incidents; and
- (d) effective inter-departmental liaison.

### **Debriefings**

20. To consolidate lessons learnt from an incident or a drill to enable better handling of similar situations in the future, debriefings (including inter-departmental debriefings) should be conducted for major incidents and drills.

### **Record Keeping**

21. WDs should keep statistics and data of emergency incidents, including those of Category 1 and 2, so that summary reports can be provided upon request.

**( C S WAI )**  
**Deputy Secretary for the Environment,**  
**Transport and Works (Works)**

**Examples that have the characteristics of a crisis**

**(a) Widespread media interest**

Incidents that do not involve loss of human life but affects tremendously the businesses belong to this category. Examples include the flooding that send dry seafood store owners to salvage their goods on main roads and water stoppage that make restaurant workers carry buckets of water in Central.

**(b) Overwhelming public concern and political sensitivity**

A burst water mains in the main thoroughfare between Central and Admiralty will cause serious disruption to traffic, particularly during morning and evening peak hours. The delay and inconvenience that the disruption will cause to people going to work in the central business area will create complaint and concern from the public, media and politicians.

**(c) Significant traffic impact**

Urgent works that will affect traffic along main thoroughfare during rush hours and works that will totally stop traffic reaching vital facilities, e.g. hospitals or schools during public examinations belong to this category.

**(d) Serious effect on members of the public or public utilities**

Prolonged stoppage of utilities to even a single building may create colourful media stories and brings criticism from residents, DC and LegCo members.

**(e) Fatality**

The community treasures human life. Any fatality involved in public works projects or incidents may become a focus of the media and LegCo members.

(The above examples are for illustration only and are not exhaustive.)



**Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (Works Branch)**  
**Category 1/2\* Emergency Incident Report**  
**Water Supply/Flooding/Landslide/Road Incidents**  
**(Sample report)**

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From:	/	To:	DS(W)1, ETWB
	(Name) (Designation)		
Tel:	/ /	Fax No.	2536 9732;
	(Office)(Mobile)(Home)	or Email	clewc.cheung@etwb.gov.hk and
		Address:	
Date:		Time:	

**(A) Technical Assessment**

1. **The Incident (Crisis/ Potential crisis\*) (Date, Time, Location with district, Cause)**

2. **Nature and Magnitude of Incident ( Crisis/ Potential crisis\*)**

3. **Characteristics or Consequential Implications including the following**

- (i) media interest,
- (ii) public concern & political sensitivity,
- (iii) traffic impact,
- (iv) effect on members of the public/public facilities and
- (v) fatality

4. **Actions Being Taken, including**

- (i) whether ETCC has been consulted before commencement of works; and
- (ii) those actions by ETCC, as appropriate

5. **Expected Completion Time, including the time for resumption of traffic flow**

6. **Remarks**

## **(B) PR Impact Assessment**

### **7. Is there Media interest/ Public concern/ Political sensitivity?**

Yes/No/To be assessed\*

### **8. Remarks:**

A supplementary assessment is attached (using Appendix C/separate sheets)/  
will be submitted separately/will be included in the next report/is not necessary\*.

Other relevant information: \_\_\_\_\_

### **(C) Subject Officer\*\* of this incident:**

Name:

Title:

Contact No.: (Office)  
(Mobile)  
(Home)

( \_\_\_\_\_ )

Deputy Director of

c.c.:-

	<b><u>Fax No.</u></b>
PSW	2523 5327
DS(W)2	2536 9299
AA/SETW	3110 2700
PAS(W)1	2524 9308
Press Secretary (ETW)	3110 2700
SPO(ETW)	2537 1877
AS(TS)2	2869 6712

Internal:

Director

AD/

CE/

SE/PR

ECC in charge

Fax - Please note and post on BBS.

\* Please delete as appropriate.

\*\* Please provide relevant information if different from sender of the report.

**Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (Works Branch)**  
**Category 1/2\* Emergency Incident Report**  
**– Supplementary PR Impact Assessment Report Form\*\*\***

From:	/	To:	DS(W)1, PAS(W)1, and SPO(ETW), ETWB
	(Name) (Designation)		
Tel:	/ /	Fax No. or Email Address:	2536 9732, 2524 9308 & 2537 1877; clewc.cheung@etwb.gov.hk and jchan@etwb.gov.hk brenda_sl_lee@etwb.gov.hk
	(Office)(Mobile)(Home)		
Date:		Priority:	Very High/High/Medium*
	Time:	Sensitivity:	Very High/High/Medium*

(I) Incident summary

(II) Reasons of sensitivity<sup>(Note 1)</sup>

(III) Initial assessment/proposed immediate actions (if required)<sup>(Note 2)</sup>

(IV) Suggested immediate Line-to-take (if required)<sup>(Note 2)</sup>

(V) Subject Officer of this incident\*\*

Name:

Title:

Contact No.: (Office)  
(Mobile)  
(Home)

( )

Deputy Director of

\* Please delete as appropriate.

\*\* Please provide relevant information if different from sender of the report.

\*\*\* Please consider putting this part of the report under confidential cover where appropriate.

(Note 1) These may include but not limited to the followings:  
 (i) media interest, (ii) public concern & political sensitivity, (iii) traffic impact,  
 (iv) effect on members of the public/public facilities, and (v) fatality.

(Note 2) Please use separate sheets as necessary.

**Broad Guidelines for Determination of the Lead Department  
for Major Emergency Incidents**

<b>Types of emergency problems</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Lead Department</b>
Water supply infrastructure	Bursting and leakage of water mains and hydrants; erosion of catchwaters, aprons and dams in water gathering grounds.	WSD
Slopes	Rock falls; landslides; instability and erosion of retaining walls, buttress and masonry.	WDs as defined in WBTC 26/99 with advice from CEDD (GEO) <sup>(Note 3)</sup>
Drainage	Flooding; blockage of stormwater drainage systems; overland flow.	DSD
Roads	Fallen trees; damages to pavement, bridges, footbridges, road furniture, crash and noise barriers.	HyD
Government buildings (except public housing)	Damaged tiles, glass panels, windows, curtain walls or external façade; collapse of gondolas, balconies, walls and partitions, scaffolding and working platforms.	ArchSD

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<sup>(Note 3)</sup> For major emergency incidents involving slopes under the purview of LandsD, CEDD will be responsible for reporting the incidents to WB upon notification from LandsD.