



**39th CMAAO General Assembly
and
60th Council Meeting**



Symposium Report — The Hong Kong Medical Association

**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS,
RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT**

PRESENTER:

DR CHAN YEE SHING, ALVIN



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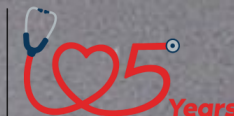
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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT





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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT

HONG KONG'S URBAN SETTING

HONG KONG'S URBAN SETTING



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Hong Kong's Urban Density

- Hong Kong's high density and urban infrastructure require careful consideration in preparedness planning.
- Elderly populations, people with disabilities and other issues of mobility require information on evacuation, medication stockpiles and availability, and alternative modes of communication in a disaster¹.



Hong Kong's Geographical Position

- Hong Kong's geographical position increases its susceptibility to climate-related threats such as typhoons, floods and infectious disease outbreaks².

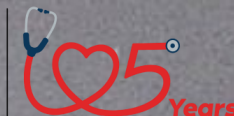


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[2] Chan, H. (2016). François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights (updated) A Scoping Study. <https://www.hkjcdpri.org.hk/download/research/ScopingStudy.pdf>



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TYPE OF DISASTERS IN HONG KONG

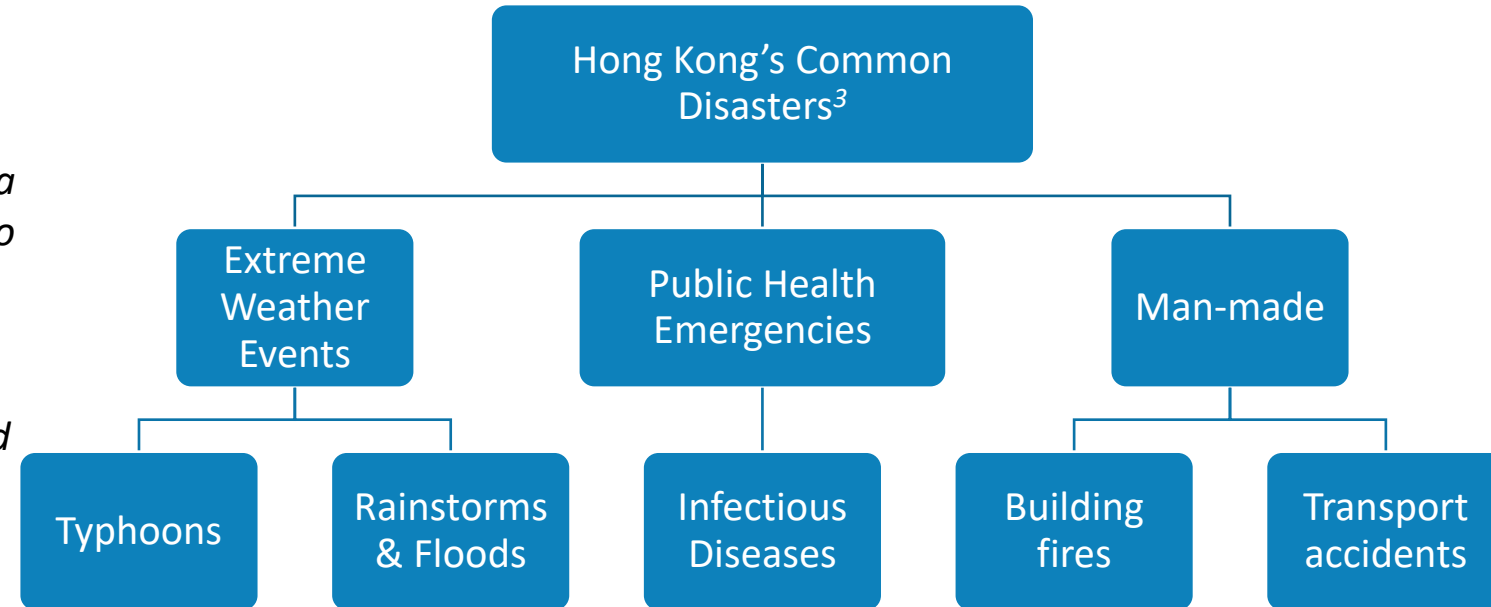


HONG KONG'S COMMON DISASTERS

What Is a Disaster?

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability, and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts⁴.

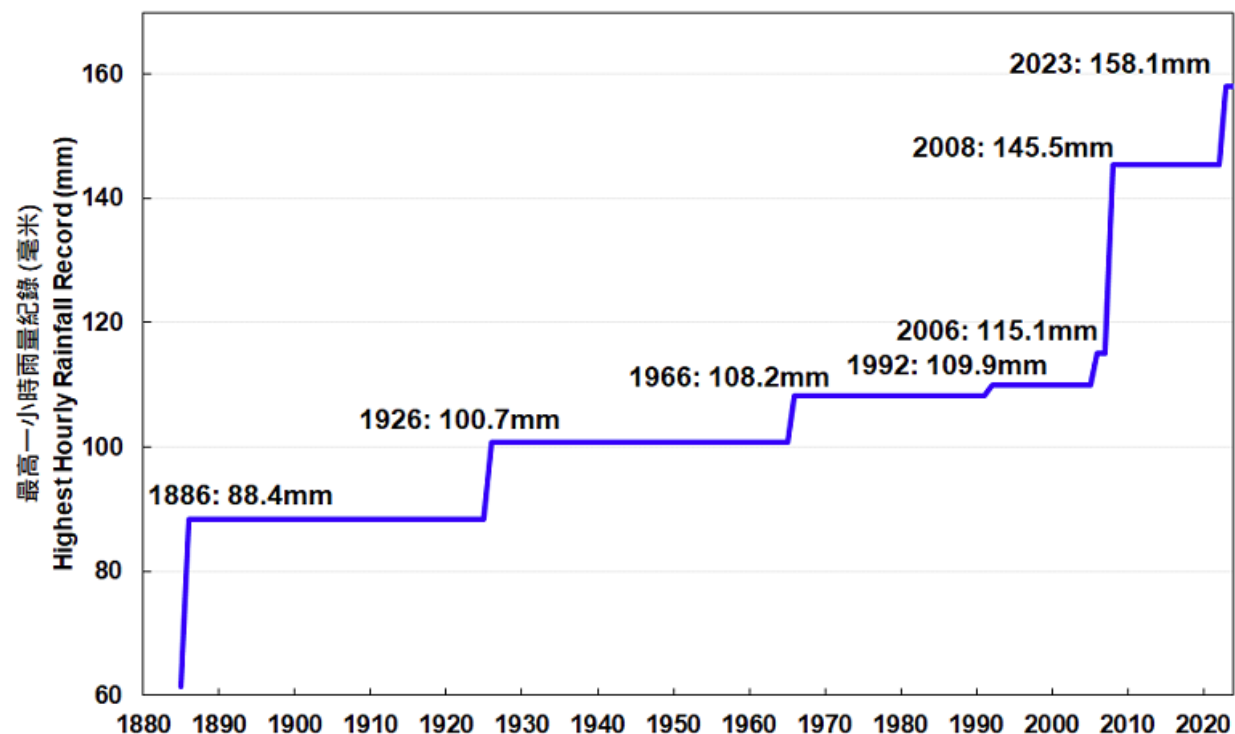
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[4] 香港常見的自然災害. 香港消防處 - 香港常見的自然災害. (n.d.). https://www.hkfsd.gov.hk/chi/cep_edu/cep/disaster_preparedness/natural_disasters_hk/

EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS



Highest hourly rainfall records at the Hong Kong Observatory Headquarters (1885-2024)

The hourly rainfall record at the Hong Kong Observatory Headquarters used to be broken once every few decades in the past. However, **the record has been broken several times in the recent few decades⁵**.

[5] *Climate change in Hong Kong - extreme weather events.* | Hong Kong Observatory(HKO) | Climate Change. (n.d.).
https://www.hko.gov.hk/en/climate_change/obs_hk_extreme_weather.htm



Typhoons (The Most Frequent Climate Disaster in Hong Kong⁶)



Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018 led to over 450 injuries. Some scholars and experts estimated a loss of HKD 1 billion, while some believed it could amount to as high as HKD 200 billion⁷.

(Photos from SCMP news⁸)

Rainstorms & Floods



Severe flooding disrupted accident and emergency services of Queen Mary Hospital on 5 August 2025⁹.

(Photos from SCMP news⁸)(Photos from DotDot news¹¹)



Hong Kong's Tseung Kwan O has experienced the highest cumulative rainfall in China so far this year, with 2,397mm (94.37 inches) recorded in the first 7½ months, topping a chart from the National Meteorological Centre¹⁰.

(From SCMP news)

[6] 1.1 typhoons: The most frequent climate disaster in Hong kong. HKU Jockey Club Enterprise Sustainability Global Research Institute. (2025, February 12). <https://hkujcesgri.hku.hk/hong-kong-economic-policy-green-paper-2025/1-1-typhoons-the-most-frequent-climate-disaster-in-hong-kong/>

[7] Disaster Psychosocial Services website. Preparedness - Disaster Psychosocial Service Website. (n.d.). https://hadps.ha.org.hk/en_prepare_detail.aspx?id=139

[8] Hong Kong faces days of uncertainty amid struggle to recover from Mangkhut. South China Morning Post. (2018, September 19). <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2164607/hong-kong-faces-days-uncertainty-it-struggles>

[9] Flooding at queen mary hospital cleared up amid deluge. RTHK. (n.d.). <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1816772-20250805.htm>

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[11] 瑪麗醫院附近道路嚴重水浸 急症服務受阻 救護車病人轉律敦治. dotdotnews. <https://www.dotdotnews.com/a/202508/05/AP6891723ce4b08d290531ad27.html>

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

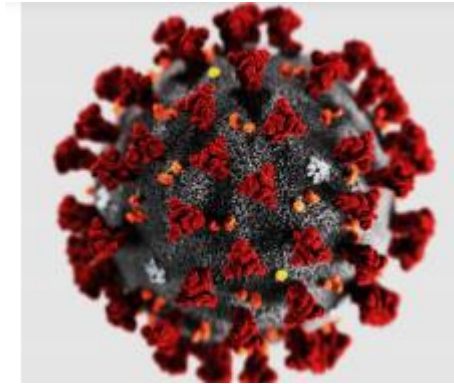


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Infectious Diseases (COVID-19)

- By Jan 2023, Hong Kong (population approx. 7.4 million) recorded approx. 2.8 million confirmed cases (about 38% of residents) and approx. 13,000 deaths, with most fatalities concentrated in the 2022 fifth wave¹².
- **Social restrictions:** Schools closed for months across multiple academic years; dine-in restrictions, gathering limits, and venue closures persisted for extended periods.
- **Quarantine/isolation:** Penny's Bay and other facilities provided over 20,000 isolation/quarantine units at peak capacity; hotel quarantine for inbound travellers lasted up to 21 days at one stage (later reduced and then removed).
- **Mental health and services:** Help-line calls and reported anxiety/depression symptoms increased markedly; routine healthcare (e.g., screenings, elective procedures) faced delays and deferrals.



MAN-MADE



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- **Building fires: Wang Fuk Court:** On 26 Nov 2025, a devastating fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po claimed 156 lives as of 3 Dec 2025 ¹³. Several factors contributed to the rapid spread of the blaze, including the use of flammable materials, fire alarm failure and polystyrene-sealed windows and shattered panes enabled flames to enter interior spaces and race upward. ¹⁴
- **Car accidents:** In 2003, a KMB route 265M bus plunged off a bridge along Tuen Mun Road near Ting Kau. The bus was struck by a container truck that suddenly cut into its lane, causing the bus to lose control, break through the barrier and fall about 35 metres down a slope—equivalent to a 10-storey drop, leading to 21 fatalities and 20 injuries. The container truck driver was convicted of dangerous driving causing death. He was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment and disqualified from driving for two years ¹⁵.



[13] Hong Kong orders judge-led inquiry into fire that killed 156. (2025, December 2). <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kong-leader-orders-independent-probe-into-fire-that-killed-151-2025-12-02/>

[14] Tai Po inferno: Hong Kong's deadliest fire in decades. (2025, December 2). https://multimedia.scmp.com/infographics/news/hong-kong/article/3334304/taipo_wangfuk_fire/index.html

[15] 【當年今日】03年巴士墜橋 釀21死20傷. <https://www.bastillepost.com/hongkong/article/3261043-%E3%80%90%E7%95%B6%E5%B9%B4%E4%BB%8A%E6%97%A5%E3%80%9115%E5%B9%B4%E5%89%8D%E5%B7%B4%E5%A3%AB%E5%A2%9C%E6%A9%8B-%E9%87%8021%E6%AD%BB20%E5%82%B7>

POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO HAZARDS

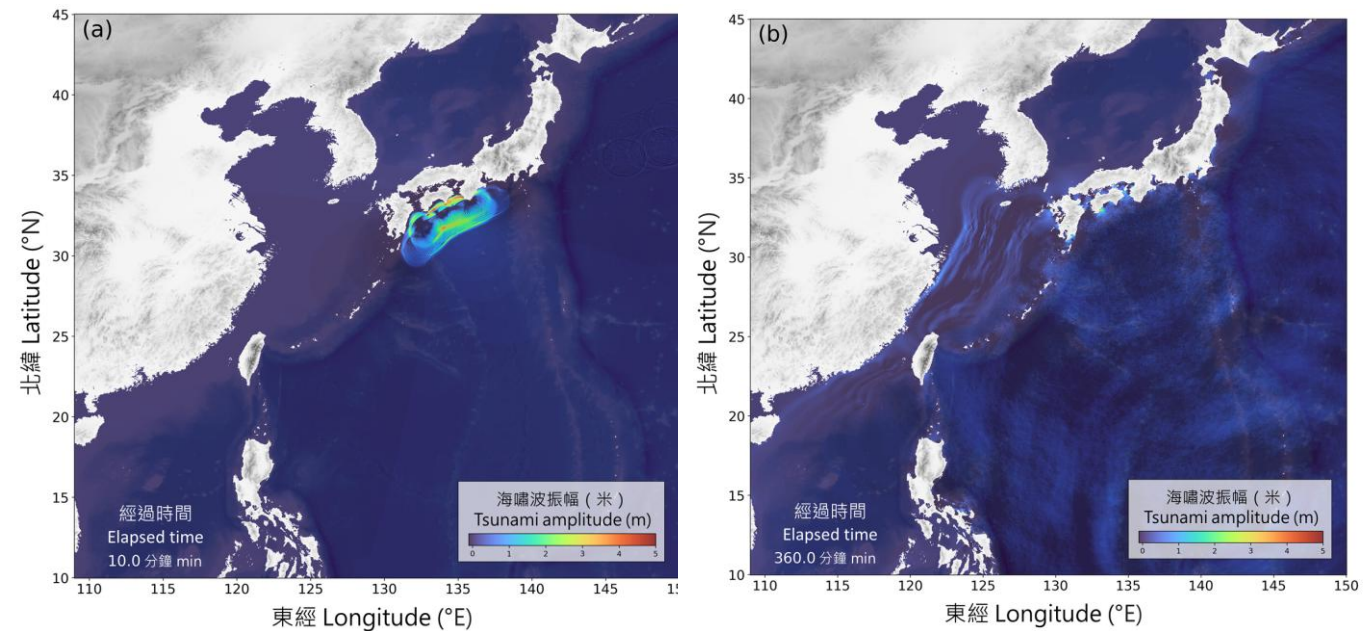


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Potential Impact of Nankai Trough Earthquakes to Hong Kong

- Given that the Nankai Trough is closer to Hong Kong than the Japan Trench, major earthquakes there could potentially result in minor sea-level anomalies in Hong Kong.
- When an earthquake occurs along the Nankai Trough, tsunami waves are expected to arrive at the southeastern waters of Hong Kong approximately 6 hours after the event, and subsequently reach the northwestern part of the Hong Kong waters within about 1 to 2 hours.
- Tsunami simulations, considering various earthquake slip distributions, indicate that part of Hong Kong's coastal areas may experience a significant tsunami in the event of a shallow M9.1 earthquake along the Nankai Trough (Figures a & b)¹⁶.



Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant¹⁷

The Guangdong Nuclear Power Station (GNPS) and Lingao Nuclear Power Station (LNPS) are located at Daya Bay, about 50 km away from the urban areas of Hong Kong.

If earthquakes occur, there is a risk that the plant will release radioactive materials. People may be exposed to radiation in three main ways:

- ✓ External exposure to radioactive substances carried in the air and deposited on the ground
- ✓ Internal exposure from inhalation of airborne radioactive substances
- ✓ Internal exposure from consumption of contaminated food and water



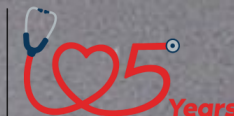
Location of the Guangdong Nuclear Power Station (GNPS) and Lingao Nuclear Power Station (LNPS) (Source of background map: Google Maps).¹⁸

[17] *How safe are the nuclear power stations at Daya Bay?*. | Hong Kong Observatory(HKO) | Educational Resources. (n.d.). <https://www.hko.gov.hk/en/education/radiation/nuclear-power/00311-how-safe-are-the-nuclear-power-stations-at-daya-bay.html>

[18] *Where are the nuclear power stations at Daya Bay and how safe are they* (n.d.). https://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/special/nuclear/files/SB_DBCP_PlanTips_en_v2.pdf



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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT

HONG KONG'S COMMUNITY & INSTITUTIONAL PREPAREDNESS

THE HKSAR GOVERNMENT'S EMERGENCY MONITORING AND SUPPORT CENTRE (EMSC)



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- Activated when major emergencies or natural disasters happen or are likely to happen¹⁹
- Monitor, coordinate, and support cross-agency emergency responses: Activate central command (e.g., EMSC/command centres), assess risks in real time, allocate resources, and maintain operational liaison among departments and auxiliary services.
- Warn, inform, and guide the public: Issue weather and hazard warnings (e.g., typhoons, rainstorms, landslips, tsunamis), provide continuous situation updates via multi-channel communications, and disseminate government decisions and safety advice.

DISASTER PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES TEAMS (DPSTS) IN HOSPITAL AUTHORITY



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- Established in 17 Acute Hospitals since 1999
- Provide service such as Psychological First Aid to survivors and their family members



Psychological service was offered to survivors and their family following the accident involving a school bus crashing onto the sidewalk in North Point in December 2018



Psychological service was offered to family members of the deceased following the tragic traffic accident in February 2018, involving 19 casualties

THE HONG KONG JOCKEY CLUB DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE INSTITUTE (HKJCDPRI)



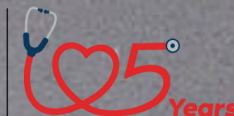
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- To reinforce Hong Kong's capability to respond to disasters and major crises, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust has donated HK\$271 million to establish Asia's first Disaster Preparedness and Response Institute
- Led by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, in collaboration with the Medical Faculty of the University of Hong Kong and Chinese University of Hong Kong, as well as overseas experts from Harvard University and the University of Oxford, HKJCDPRI focuses on training local healthcare professionals, NGOs, teachers, and the public to prepare and respond strategically to disaster



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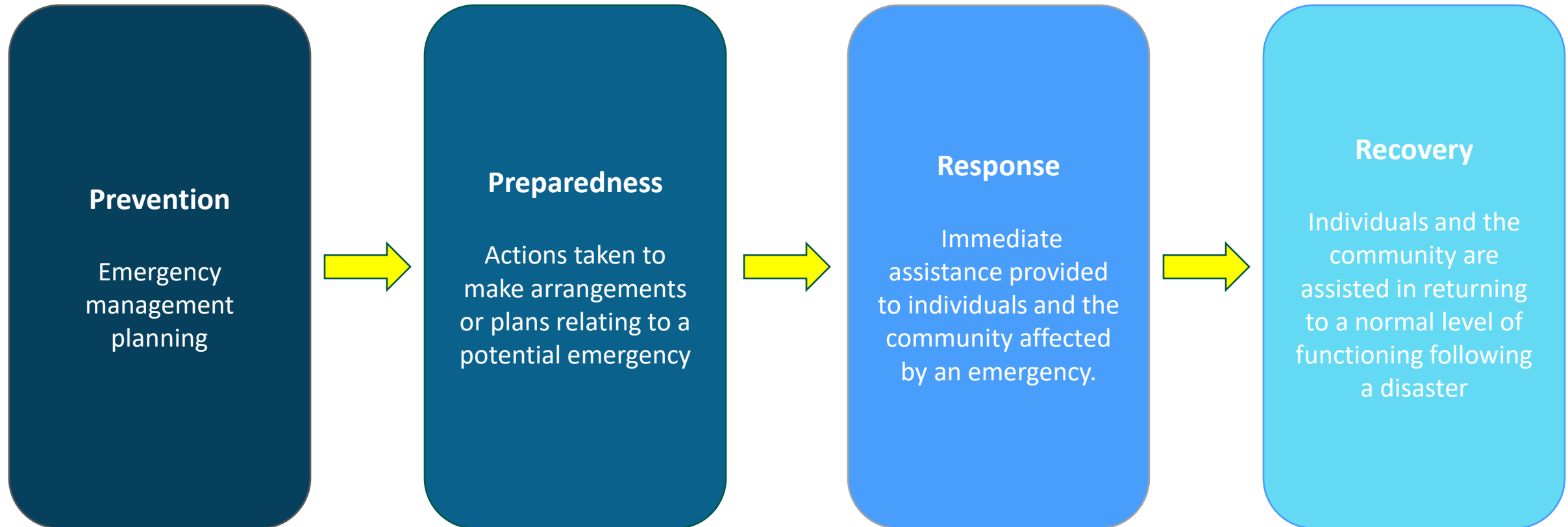


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EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (PPRR MODEL)



PPRR MODEL²⁰



[20] Gawler Council. (n.d.). *PPRR explained*. Retrieved September 5, 2025, from <https://www.gawler.sa.gov.au/services/emergency-management/pppr-explained>

CASE STUDY 1: BUILDINGS FIRES – THE WANG FUK COURT BLAZE



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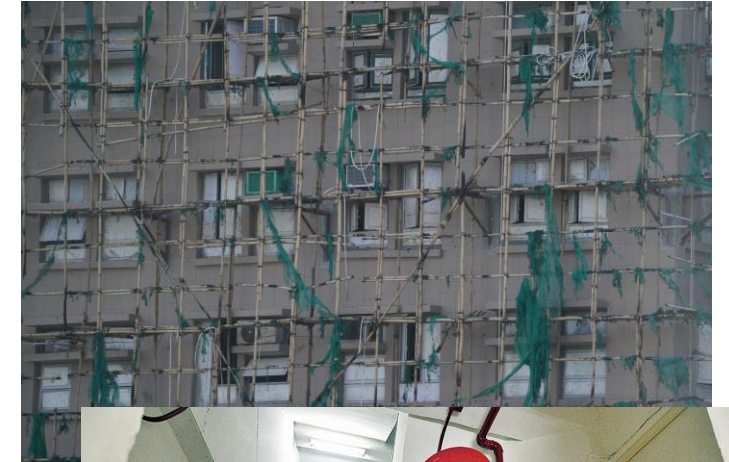


PHASE 1: PREVENTION

Prevention

Fire Safety Improvements

- **High risk materials and scaffolding:** Expanded polystyrene boards and extensive bamboo scaffolding wrapped with netting acted as major fuel and pathways for fire spread; stricter regulation of façade materials, mandatory use of certified non combustible or properly fire retardant systems, and independent third party inspection should be required before work starts.
- **Fire system integrity during renovation:** Investigations suggest alarms were faulty and may have been intentionally disabled to ease worker access, and residents reported no alarms sounding; clear legal prohibitions, lock out/tag out controls, and real time monitoring of alarm status are critical, with heavy penalties for disabling systems.
- **Smoking and hot work controls:** Residents had earlier complained about workers smoking and discarding cigarette butts on site; strict smoking bans, designated smoking areas far from scaffolding, supervision, and surprise inspections could reduce ignition risk.

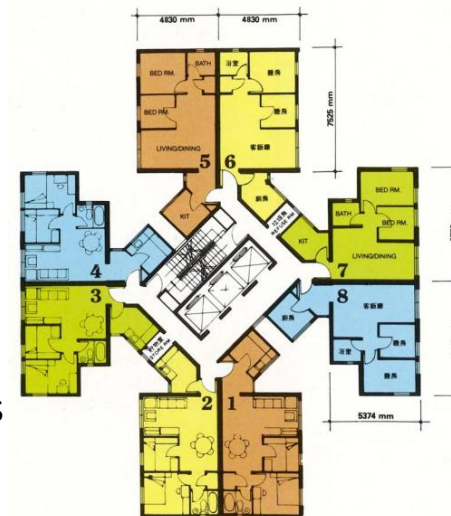


PHASE 2: PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness

High-rise buildings require solid pre-incident planning and clear resident preparedness.

- **Pre incident planning for high rise complexes:** With eight towers and about 2,000 flats, detailed pre plans (stairwells, refuge floors, roof access, hydrants, sprinkler and alarm layouts) should be developed jointly by fire services, building management, and contractors.
- **Resident information and drills:** Many residents were alerted by neighbours or messaging apps rather than alarms; regular multilingual fire briefings, evacuation drills, and clear guidance for “shelter in place” versus evacuation routes are needed, especially during major renovation.
- **Resource and escalation planning:** A complex of this size under full height scaffolding should have been pre classified as high risk, with trigger points for rapid alarm upgrading and pre deployment of additional ladders, rescue equipment, and command staff.





PHASE 3: RESPONSE

Emergency Response & Government Support

Response

All departments swiftly activated emergency measures to support rescue efforts.

- The Fire Services Department swiftly escalated the alarm and deployed water jets, turntable ladders, and numerous search and rescue teams, mobilising over 1,200 fire and ambulance personnel. Police officers coordinated large-scale evacuation, traffic control, and set up a casualty enquiry hotline. Public hospitals activated major incident protocols, with accident and emergency departments, ICUs, and burn units fully engaged and medical teams dispatched to the scene for triage and urgent treatment.
- Various government departments opened temporary shelters, arranged transportation, and provided welfare, emotional support, and medical assistance to affected residents. Authorities will also conduct investigations into construction safety and fire-retardant materials used on scaffolding. Government teams continue relief operations and assistance for the injured and bereaved families.





RESPONSE FROM THE HKMA

- **Immediate donation support:** Following the fire incident on 26 November 2025 at Wang Fuk Court, the Hong Kong Medical Association Charitable Foundation immediately announced a donation of HKD 1 million to support disaster relief efforts. At the same time, the HKMA encouraged its members to make emergency donations and participate in fundraising initiatives through announcements on its website and email.
- **Volunteer medical team:** The HKMA formed a volunteer medical team to provide medical support at Wang Fuk Court, including nursing care and assistance in addressing the healthcare needs of affected residents. As of 8 December, a total of 365 doctors applied to join the volunteer team and 26 doctors personally attended duty at the medical stations set up at the temporary shelters. The team offered immediate medical assistance to affected residents, enabling the first phase of medical support to be implemented in a stable and orderly manner.
- **Pro bono medical consultation programme:** In response to the Government's post-fire support arrangements, the HKMA is actively supporting and promoting the Government's pro bono medical consultation programme for residents affected by the fire. The HKMA is assisting by encouraging its members, particularly family doctors, to register and take part in the programme.





PHASE 4: RECOVERY

Recovery

The Government promptly implemented emergency measures to address the immediate and longer-term needs of affected residents.

Short to Medium Term

- **Emergency shelters:** To meet immediate accommodation needs, the Government has opened nine shelters housing over 500 residents. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau has arranged around 1,000 hostel and hotel units for short-term stays of one to two weeks. Additionally, about 1,800 transitional and dedicated rehousing units from the Hong Kong Housing Society will be provided later.
- **Financial aid:** The Government will offer an emergency cash subsidy of HK\$10,000 per affected household and allocate HK\$300 million as start-up capital to support residents and related relief work. The fund is now open for public donations.
- **Health support:** The Social Welfare Department has deployed social workers, clinical psychologists, and support staff to provide “one social worker per household” support, covering emotional counselling, financial assistance, residential care, and occasional child-care services.



Two government accounts are open for public donations



Bank: Bank of China (Hong Kong)

For Hong Kong dollar donations:

Account no: 012-875-2-190159-7

For donations in other currencies:

Account no: 012-875-2-190160-7

Open from: 7 pm, Nov 27



PHASE 4: RECOVERY

Recovery

Individuals and the community are assisted in returning to a normal level of functioning following a disaster

Long Term

- **Accident investigation:** Police have seized materials suspected of failing to meet regulatory standards. Once the fire is fully extinguished and the site is safe, Police and the Fire Services Department will conduct a comprehensive investigation to determine the cause.
- **Safety checks on other buildings:** The Buildings Department has required contractors to submit records or test certificates on fire-retardant scaffold materials within seven days, followed by audit checks. The Architectural Services Department has issued the same requirement for all public works projects.
- **Fire safety in maintenance sites:** Since 28 November, the Labour Department has carried out territory-wide inspections of building maintenance sites with large scaffolds, ensuring protective screens comply with recognised fire-retardant standards and strengthening fire emergency preparedness.





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CASE STUDY 2: EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS – TYPHOON WIPHA 2025





PHASE 1: PREVENTION

Prevention

Emergency
management
planning

- Before the landing of Typhoon " Wipha", the government quickly convened a "meeting of the steering committee on inter-departmental handling of typhoons" to coordinate the responsibilities of various departments, including the Drainage Services Department, the Highways Department, and the Fire Services Department





PHASE 2: PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness

Actions taken to make arrangements or plans relating to a potential emergency

- In response to the potential storm in Tai Po Kau, the Drainage Services Department set up inflatable flood barriers and drainage pumps in advance, achieving "zero flooding." This precise deployment reflects the government's foresight in preventing potential risks
- Public warning and information transparency are crucial. The Observatory releases warning signals to the public 48 hours in advance using "wind forecasts" and "storm surge simulation" technology. This warning further helped citizens in preparing for disaster and avoid panic.





PHASE 3: RESPONSE

Government-Community Joint Collaboration

Response

Immediate assistance provided to individuals and the community affected by an emergency.

- During the typhoon, over 700 reports of fallen trees and 7 cases of flooding were recorded across the city, all of which were addressed promptly. For example, the Transport Department established a “traffic sharing system” with bus companies. 80% of public transport restore its services within 2 hours after the storm, much quicker than the 12-hour paralysis caused by "Mangkhut" in 2018.
- Community participation was also crucial. The Wong Tai Sin care team proactively visited elderly residents to reinforce windows, clear broken glass, and remove fallen trees; the Eastern District care team inspected hazardous buildings and reported them immediately.





PHASE 4: RECOVERY

Recovery

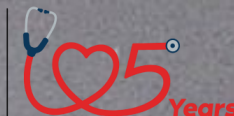
Individuals and the community are assisted in returning to a normal level of functioning following a disaster

- The government conducted special inspection on high-risk areas such as trees, slopes, and signage. For instance, the Kwun Tong Care Team guided residents to evacuate from a fallen tree to prevent secondary disasters. Data-driven upgrades for disaster prevention were also implemented
- The Drainage Services Department identified five rainwater drainage systems that need improvement based on drainage data collected during Typhoon "Wipha" and incorporated these findings into the 2025 infrastructure optimization plan. This "post-disaster learning" mechanism reflects the government's shift from "emergency management" to "risk governance"





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DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND MANAGEMENT

HONG KONG DOCTORS ON THE FRONTLINES: LESSONS FROM GLOBAL DISASTER RELIEF



STORY OF DR AU, YIU-KAI



- Dr AU went on his first humanitarian mission as a war surgeon with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Lopiding Hospital in Lokichogio, Kenya in 2002
- Dr AU then went on different humanitarian missions in conflict or disaster-affected countries and areas such as South Sudan, Iraq, Nigeria, the Philippines and Haiti
- With limited resources available, Dr AU performed surgical operations and applied his expertise to the fullest in these critical conditions.

"I learnt most of these skills and techniques during my many overseas missions. I couldn't have practiced these skills in Hong Kong."

- Dr Au, Yiu-kai



STORY OF DR FAN NING



- Dr Fan has worked to provide humanitarian aid in war-torn and disaster-ridden areas, such as Kenya, Sri Lanka, Gaza, Haiti and Libya
- Dr FAN went to Sichuan Province to provide emergency medical services in the hardest hit region, Beichuan County after the 5.12 Sichuan earthquake. He is also involved in the relief work of the Hong Kong SAR Government Flying Service on a voluntary basis
- In the face of insufficient medical services resulting from disasters, Dr FAN always reflected on how medical professionals could provide suitable and timely treatments during these difficult circumstances

"I ask myself if I were the one who sought help, what kind of assistance would give me the chance to positively face every single day in future?"

- Dr Fan NING



HKSAR SEARCH AND TEAM RESCUE IN QUAKE-STRICKEN AREAS OF TÜRKIYE



- A 59-member HKSAR search and rescue team, including an integrated medical unit, was sent to Türkiye on February 8 to provide immediate assistance in response to the catastrophic 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake.
- A dedicated medical team delivered 24/7 care, maintaining the physical and mental resilience of the frontline rescuers and enabling them to perform at their best.
- The mission culminated in the successful rescue of four survivors, a direct result of the team's expertise and unwavering readiness.

GLOBAL LESSONS FOR LOCAL CHALLENGES



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- Not only did the medical professionals contribute to a critical humanitarian endeavour, but they also gained firsthand experience in an extremely complex disaster zone.
- Provided vital knowledge to enhance the capabilities of Hong Kong's frontline responders in future and potential crises.
- Generated practical insights that strengthen all phases of Hong Kong's disaster management: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.

REFERENCE



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THANK YOU