

**Minutes of the 27th Meeting of the Gas Safety Advisory Committee (GSAC)
Held on 3 November 2008 in the Conference Room 7102,
7/F, EMSD Headquarters, 3 Kai Shing Street, Hong Kong**

Present

Mr. HO Kwong-wai, JP	Chairman
Dr. CHUNG Wah-fuk, David	
Mr. KOT Man-tai	
Mr. KWAN Yuk-choi, James, JP	
Dr. LAM Po-hing, Michael	
Mr. LUN Chi-leung, Kenneth	
Mrs. POON YAM Wai-chun, Winnie, MH	
Ms. WONG Shuk-kiu, Kathy	
Ms. WU I-ying, Peggy	
Mr. YUEN Se-kit, Patrick, BBS, MH	
Mr. LEUNG Wing-chung, Erik	Secretary

In Attendance

Mr. CHAN Hung-cheung, Stephen	EMSD
Mr. CHEUNG Ping –kuen, Michael	EMSD
Mr. HO Hon-ying, Lewis	EMSD
Mr. WONG Sek-cheung	EMSD

Absent with Apologies

Mrs. Eli WOO LI

08/08 The Chairman welcomed Members to the 27th meeting and mentioned that Mrs. Eli WOO LI had sent in her apology for not being able to attend the meeting.

09/08 Confirmation of Minutes of the 26th Meeting held on 21 April 2008

Without further amendments, the minutes of the 26th Meeting held on 21 April 2008 were confirmed.

(a) Safety Publicity

(Minute reference 04/08 (a) refers)

- (i) After a review of the past promotional activities, Members were updated on the planned gas safety publicity work in the next 6 months as follows:
- “E&M Safety Carnival 2008” on 15 & 16 November 2008 and Members were invited to join.
 - Distribution of leaflets to promote the safe use of fire torches.
 - Inspection of catering shops to promote the safe use of cassette cookers.
 - Distribution of comprehensive E&M safety leaflets to promote domestic safety.
 - Organisation of safety talks to Registered Gas Contractors and Installers.
 - Distribution of leaflets to the catering trade to promote the safe use of medium pressure gas appliances.
 - Distribution of leaflets to educate the public on the use of LPG refrigerators.
- (ii) Ms. Kathy WONG commended the introduction of online gas safety quiz in the “E&M Safety Carnival 2008” which helped promote E&M safety among youngsters. EMSD reported that there were more than 2,000 participants in the online quiz competition.
- (iii) Mr. Patrick YUEN enquired whether there was any restriction on the import of fire torches. EMSD replied that importation of such torches would not require EMSD’s approval. The publicity work would concentrate on educating the public on the safe use of fire torches.

(b) LPG Vehicle Fuel Tank 5-Year Revalidation

(Minute reference 04/08(c) refers)

- (i) Members were informed that more than 17,700 LPG vehicle fuel tanks had been revalidated since January 2003. According to the requirement for 5-yearly revalidation, there would be about 150 and

1,500 tanks due for revalidation in 2008 (4th quarter) and 2009 respectively.

(c) Domestic Refrigerators Using LPG as Refrigerant

(Minute reference 04/08(d) refers)

- (i) Members were advised that there were about 40,000 LPG refrigerators in circulation. A working group meeting was held in May 2008 with representatives from EMSD, refrigerator importers and the Vocational Training Council (VTC). Refrigerator importers had voluntarily agreed to attach a flammable LPG warning label on the refrigerator. The drafting of guidance notes on the safe use of LPG refrigerators was in progress. The target was to complete the drafting work by end 2008 and VTC would organise training courses for maintenance staff accordingly.
- (ii) Ms. Peggy WU enquired whether any special precautions were needed for the refrigerator users. EMSD replied that the warning label would serve as a cautionary note to the user.
- (iii) Dr. David CHUNG asked if the attachment of the flammable LPG warning label would cause any confusion for the electrical manufacturer with the requirement of EN 60335-2-24. EMSD replied that they would liaise with the importers to avoid any confusion on the voluntary use of the LPG warning label.

(d) Code of Practice for LPG Distributors

(Minute reference 04/08(e) refers)

- (i) EMSD reported that the LPG supply companies considered that the revision of LPG Cylinder Distributor Code of Practice (COP) was an essential prerequisite to the implementation of Service Level Recognition (SLR). The original plan of introducing the LPG Cylinder Distributor SLR Scheme in November 2008 would therefore have to be deferred to 2009.
- (ii) Mr. James KWAN enquired who would carry out the distributor audits. EMSD replied that LPG supply companies would take charge of the audits. EMSD would carry out quality assurance audits of about 10% (randomly-selected) and at least 2 distributors for each LPG supply

company.

- (iii) Ms. Peggy WU added that a revised COP would provide a more practical platform for distributor auditing. The discrepancies between distributors would be more easily assessed based on the revised COP. Independent auditors could be introduced for the assessment of all distributors but details would need to be finalised in the working group.
- (iv) Mr. KOT Man-tai added that in principle the LPG distributor union supported the SLR scheme but details needed to be discussed and agreed in the working group.
- (v) Mr. Kenneth LUN enquired about the reasons for COP revision. EMSD emphasised that the revision would not degrade the current gas safety standard. The reason for revision was to bring in the practical aspects obtained from the trial run in the past few years. The revised areas would mainly be in the items such as administration / disciplinary action.
- (vi) Mr. James KWAN enquired whether the COP would be made available to the public and who would be the issuing body of the SLR award certificate. EMSD replied that the COP was only an internal document within the LPG cylinder trade. However, it had been agreed in the working group that the revised COP would be made available to the public. As the SLR scheme belonged to the LPG supply companies, the award certificate would be issued by the LPG supply companies with EMSD's endorsement. Mr. Kwan suggested EMSD to review the liability of EMSD's endorsement. EMSD would further work with the industry and the trade accordingly.

(e) Addition of Caution Marking on Flexible Gas Tubing

(Minute reference 05/08(a) refers)

- (i) EMSD advised Members that there were about 2,700 metres of flexible gas tubing in existing stock and it would last for about 2 years. The trade would add the Chinese caution marking "not to exceed 2 metres" in all their new batches for import. The flexible tubing COP was being revised. Tentatively the revised COP would be gazetted in early 2009 after consultation with the trade.

- (ii) Mr. James KWAN suggested that the caution marking should be bilingual in both English and Chinese. EMSD would further work with the industry and the trade accordingly.

(f) Feasibility Study on Introducing Natural Gas / Liquefied Petroleum Gas Buses and Heavy Duty Vehicles in Hong Kong

(Minute reference 06/08(a) refers)

- (i) EMSD advised Members of the progress of the consultancy study on introducing natural gas/LPG vehicles in Hong Kong. The consultancy study would be completed by the end of 2008. The Government would examine in detail the findings of the study, including the supply of fuels, the practicability of establishing the required refilling infrastructure and the additional risks, availability of suitable vehicle models, and environmental benefits.
- (ii) In response to the enquiry by Mr. James KWAN, EMSD advised that the consultant had approached gas supply companies to obtain relevant information in the course of the study. EMSD further advised that the findings would be presented to the Members after the completion of the study.
- (iii) Mr. Kenneth LUN asked if the threshold storage quantity for natural gas would be different from that of 25 tonnes for LPG in respect of classification of Potential Hazardous Installations (PHI). Mr. James KWAN mentioned that the risks due to natural gas and LPG should be different. EMSD replied that the issue had been addressed in the study and overseas practice had been taken into account, and details would be available after the completion of the study.
- (iii) Dr. David CHUNG asked if cross-border vehicles had been considered. EMSD replied that cross-border vehicles had been included in the study and issues like vehicle availability and refilling infrastructure requirements in Hong Kong had been addressed.

(a) Incident and Prosecution Statistics for 2007 and 2008

- (i) EMSD briefed Members on the 467 incident cases in 2007, of which 25 were incidents involving serious injury and one fatality. In the first 9 months in 2008, there were 334 incident cases, of which 15 were serious incidents but no fatality.
- (ii) Ms. Winnie POON commented that the chance of gas leakage in aged properties would be higher than new buildings. She enquired whether the gas supply companies would double their efforts to revisit those aged properties where access for gas safety inspection was not available during their first safety inspection visit.
- (iii) Mr. James KWAN advised that Hong Kong & China Gas (HKCG) would normally leave a card to the property owner if the first visit was not successful so that the owner could contact their company to arrange a revisit.
- (iv) Ms. Peggy WU added that some of the gas leakage might occur in the gas pipe installed in the commonly owned areas where the property management company and the Incorporated Owners would be involved to obtain agreement on repair.
- (v) EMSD echoed that EMSD and HKCG had jointly met with the property management companies and the Incorporated Owners to raise their awareness of the need for riser maintenance. As a result of the joint effort, the number of gas pipe incident cases in 2008 was reduced.
- (vi) EMSD reported that there were 101 prosecution cases in 2007, and about 92 cases for 2008.
- (vii) Mr. Patrick YUEN asked if the increase in the prosecutions involving Registered Gas Installer (RGI) could be attributed to inadequate RGI training or poor workmanship. EMSD replied that some of those cases involved RGI not being employed by Registered Gas Contractors (RGC) or a non-RGI carrying out gas installation work. This was one of the main reasons that EMSD stepped up the publicity work in giving safety talks to

RGC/RGI in the last few months.

(b) Laundry Shop Inspection

(Minute reference 04/08(e) refers)

- (i) EMSD briefed Members that, following the completion of town gas fuelled laundry shop safety inspections earlier this year, EMSD had carried out 417 safety inspections on LPG fuelled laundry shops since April 2008. In total, 158 Improvement Notices (IN) had been issued.

12/08 Any Other Business

- (a) Ms. Peggy WU commented that, due to the current economic downturn, more people would be inclined to opt for shortcuts and compromise gas safety. She suggested that both the gas supply companies and EMSD reinforce their gas safety inspection efforts.
- (b) Ms. Kathy WONG asked if EMSD would work with VTC to have some short courses to boost up the RGI's electrical knowledge. EMSD agreed to explore this possibility with VTC accordingly.

13/08 Date of Next Meeting

Members will be informed in due course regarding the date of the next meeting.

EWCL/Secretary, GSAC

December 2008