

**Minutes of the 28th Meeting of the Gas Safety Advisory Committee (GSAC)
Held on 7 April 2009 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	
Mr. LUN Chi-leung, Kenneth	
Mrs. POON YAM Wai-chun, Winnie, MH	
Ms. WONG Shuk-kiu, Kathy	
Ms. WU I-ying, Peggy	
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

Dr. LAM Po-hing, Michael
Mr. YUEN Se-kit, Patrick, BBS, MH
Mrs. Eli WOO LI

01/09 The Chairman welcomed Members to the 28th meeting and mentioned that Dr. LAM Po-hing, Michael, Mr. YUEN Se-kit, Patrick, and Mrs. Eli WOO LI had sent in their apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.

02/09 Confirmation of Minutes of the 27th Meeting held on 3 November 2008

Without further amendments, the minutes of the 27th Meeting held on 3 November 2008 were confirmed.

(a) Safety Publicity

(Minute reference 10/08 (a) refers)

(i) Members were updated on the progress of the 2008/09 gas safety publicity work as follows:

- Gas safety promotion video on “concealed pipe” (completed).
- Distribution of E&M safety leaflets to promote domestic safety (completed).
- “E&M Safety Carnival 2008” was held on 15 & 16 November 2008 with more than 10,000 participants (completed).
- Inspection of catering shops to promote the safe use of cassette cooker (completed).
- Organisation of safety talks to Registered Gas Contractors and Installers (3 talks were conducted).
- Distribution of leaflet to promote the safe use of fire torch (completed)
- Due to the extended consultation period of the guidance notes till mid April 2009, the planned distribution of leaflets to promote the safe use of “medium pressure appliance” and “LPG refrigerant” was deferred.

(ii) Members were briefed on the 2009/10 focal points of promotion activities as follows:

- Safe use of LPG cylinder and 18 months regular safety inspection.
- Avoiding damage to concealed gas pipe.
- Replacement of expired low-pressure rubber gas tubing.
- “E&M Safety Carnival 2009”.

(b) LPG Vehicle Fuel Tank 5-Year Revalidation

(Minute reference 10/08(b) refers)

(i) Members were informed that more than 18,000 LPG vehicle fuel tanks had been revalidated since January 2003. Taking into consideration that some of the 10-year old vehicles would be replaced and their LPG fuel tanks would be disposed, it was estimated that there would be

about 1,000 tanks due for revalidation in 2009, 4,000 tanks in 2010 and 5,000 tanks in 2011.

(c) Domestic Refrigerators Using LPG as Refrigerant

(Minute reference 10/08(c) refers)

- (i) Members were advised that, at the request of the trade, the consultation period for the guidance note on LPG refrigerant was extended to mid April 2009. Once the guidance note had been finalised, training course on maintenance work of refrigerators with LPG as refrigerant would be held by VTC. As of end March 2009, none of the refrigerator importers had expressed interest in setting up their own LPG refrigerant maintenance workshop locally in Hong Kong. There were about 40,000 to 50,000 LPG refrigerators imported to Hong Kong.

(d) Code of Practice for LPG Distributors

(Minute reference 04/08(d) refers)

- (i) EMSD reported that the discussion with the LPG supply trade on the revision of Code of Practice (COP) for LPG Distributors was still on-going. It was expected to be completed in July 2009. Without degrading the gas safety standard, the revision would be focused on essential gas safety issues and simplify the non-core gas safety related administration matters, such as change of distributor business ownership, etc. In the light of the revised COP, each LPG supply company would prepare their own in-house code for their respective distributors to suit their own needs.
- (ii) Ms. Peggy WU commented that recently there was a change in EMSD's practice in the notification of undesirable distributors' behaviour. EMSD's practice in the past was to address the letter to the concerned distributor directly with a copy to the relevant LPG supply company for information. The latest practice was to send the letter to the LPG supply company direct with a copy to the distributor. EMSD responded that such practice was in line with the LPG supply company's responsibility under the Regulation 14 of the Gas Safety Ordinance Cap.51E to monitor its gas distributors.

- (iii) Ms. WU mentioned that there were limitations for the LPG supply companies to carry out Cap.51E, Regulation 14.
- (iv) Mr. Kenneth LUN commented that, being one of drafting committee members of the Gas Safety Ordinance Cap.51, at the time of drafting the legislation, the intent of the Regulation 14, Cap.51E was in response to LPG supply trade's suggestion of self-regulation.
- (v) Ms. Kathy WONG commented that, with the Government's involvement, it would be easier for the LPG supply companies to exercise their duty under Regulation 14, Cap. 51E. Ms. Peggy WU concurred with Ms. Kathy WONG on this point.
- (vi) Mr. James KWAN opined that, from the consumer's point of view, if the existing legislation had only empowered the Government to regulate the LPG supply company and not the distributors, and the LPG supply companies found it ineffective in monitoring their own distributors, then review should be carried out to decide whether the trade should be allowed to maintain self-regulation status.
- (vii) Ms. Winnie POON added that, from the gas consumer's point of view, for any gas incident, no matter whether it was the LPG supply company or the distributor at fault, the ultimate gas safety regulation responsibility rested with the Government.
- (viii) Mr. James KWAN enquired about the legal status of the COP. EMSD explained that the approved COP laid down a set of acceptable practices for the industry to follow. According to Section 10 of Chapter 51, failure to observe any provision of the approved COP would not be an offence. However, any provision of the approved COP which being considered to be relevant to a requirement under the Ordinance alleged to have contravened would be admissible in evidence by the court in the criminal proceedings.
- (ix) The Chairman added that under the existing legislation, the duty of monitoring distributors rested with the LPG supply companies. There were pros on cons in this arrangement. Members' view on the need for reviewing the existing legislation would be considered.

(e) Addition of Caution Marking on Flexible Gas Tubing

(Minute reference 10/08(e) refers)

- (i) EMSD advised Members that the consultation of the COP for flexible tubing COP was in progress. Tentatively the COP would be gazetted in May 2009. A full review of having the caution marking “not to exceed 2 metres” in bilingual languages had been carried out. Based on the findings and comments received, the consensus was that it would not be practical to lengthen the caution marking further. After some discussion, it was agreed to have the caution marking in its current format in view of the advisory nature of the marking.

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

(Minute reference 10/08(f) refers)

- (i) EMSD advised Members that the consultancy study on introducing natural gas/LPG vehicles in Hong Kong had been completed. The executive summary of the study had been uploaded to EMSD website (<http://www.emsd.gov.hk>). From the technical feasibility point of view, there were three key considerations identified in the study, namely “Availability of Vehicles”; “Infrastructure Requirements”; and “Environmental Benefits”. The study concluded that LPG/NG vehicles were not practicable for buses or heavy duty vehicles in Hong Kong because of the difficulties associated with developing the infrastructure for an entirely new fuel. Moreover, as compared with EURO V diesel vehicles, the environmental benefit in reducing vehicle emissions and improving air quality was not significant.
- (ii) In response to the enquiry by Mrs. Winnie POON, EMSD replied that should there be any media enquiry on the study, the media might be advised to approach EMSD direct.

(g) Incident and Prosecution Statistics for 2007 and 2008

(Minute reference 11/08(a) refers)

- (i) EMSD briefed Members on the past 2 years incident statistics where 25 serious incident cases involving one fatality occurred in 2007 and 17 serious incident cases but no fatality occurred in 2008. The benchmarks

on Hong Kong serious incidents and underground gas pipe leakage incidents with 3 developed countries in the years 2006 to 2008 were also shown to Members. It was noted that the gas safety standard in Hong Kong was on par with other developed countries.

- (ii) EMSD reported that there were 101 prosecution cases in 2007, and 92 cases for 2008. The corresponding distributor related prosecution cases were 41 and 55.
- (iii) Ms. Peggy WU enquired whether there was any correlation amongst various LPG distributors involved in the distributor related prosecution cases. EMSD replied that no correlation had been noted on the prosecution cases amongst various LPG distributors.

04/09 **New Item**

No new item was proposed by Members.

05/09 **Any Other Business**

- (a) Dr. David CHUNG enquired how often the Registered Gas Contractor (RGC) list was updated in EMSD's website. EMSD replied that there was no renewal requirement for RGC. The RGC listing was based on the assessment of the RGC capability at the time of application and subsequently the information was updated from time to time in accordance with the RGC audit result / new information received. After some discussion, EMSD would proactively conduct periodic enquiry to RGC to update the listing as far as practicable.
- (2) EMSD reported that, in response to Ms. Peggy WU's comment in the last meeting on reinforcing gas safety inspection efforts due to current economic downturn, both EMSD and LPG supply companies had already stepped up their gas safety inspection efforts in the last few months.
- (3) EMSD reported that in response to Ms. Kathy WONG's comment in last meeting on enhancing the Registered Gas Installers' (RGI) electrical knowledge. At the request of EMSD, E&M Training Board of VTC had set up a working group to review the matter. Subject to the final approval of E&M Training Board, the working group had proposed two part-time training courses to be held at VTC for enhancing the electrical knowledge of the practising RGIs.

- (4) Ms. Kathy WONG commended EMSD's swift response in setting up the electrical training courses for RGI, and also in clarifying the Registered Electrical Worker (REW) requirements for gas installer.
- (5) The Chairman distributed a booklet on EMSD's gas safety regulatory services, titled "A Shared Commitment, 30 Years of Gas Safety" to all Members. He thanked all the GSAC Members for their contributions in enhancing gas safety in Hong Kong.
- (6) As this meeting would be the last GSAC meeting in the current 2 years term, the Chairman thanked all the Members for their valuable contributions.

06/09 **Date of Next Meeting**

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

EWCL/Secretary, GSAC
April 2009