

# Handling Emergencies

Best Practice Guide

Code No.: G12/2022



**Property Management Services Authority**  
**Best Practice Guide on Handling Emergencies**

**Guide No. : G12/2022**

**Effective Date : 29 July 2022**

**Preamble**

For the purpose of enabling licensees<sup>1</sup> to comply more effectively and professionally with the guidelines set out in the code of conduct<sup>2</sup> entitled “Handling Emergencies” (Code No.: C12/2022)(Code) issued by the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA) on 29 July 2022, the PMSA provides relevant guidelines in this best practice guide (Guide) pursuant to section 44<sup>3</sup> of the Property Management Services Ordinance (Cap. 626)(PMSO). While licensees are encouraged to use their best endeavours to follow the Guide, failure to comply with the Guide will, however, not be regarded as a disciplinary offence referred to in section 4 of the PMSO.

Licensed property management companies (licensed PMCs), during the provision of property management services (PMSs) for properties, may encounter emergencies or unexpected situations which require immediate action, e.g. typhoons, adverse weather, flooding, pipe bursts, power outages, water suspension, fires, gas leakages, damaged facilities, lift malfunctions, crime, illegal activities, public hygiene issues, spreading of diseases etc. (hereinafter collectively referred to as “emergencies”). The PMSA has formulated the Code to provide practical guidance to licensed PMCs on handling emergencies, and this Guide aims to enable licensees to comply more effectively and professionally with the guidelines set out in the Code.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “licensee” means the holder of the following licence: a PMC licence; a PMP (Tier 1) licence; a PMP (Tier 2) licence; a provisional PMP (Tier 1) licence; or a provisional PMP (Tier 2) licence.

<sup>2</sup> With regard to the code of conduct containing practical guidance issued by the PMSA under section 5 of the PMSO for the purpose of section 4 of the PMSO (disciplinary offences), although a licensee does not incur a legal liability only because the licensee has contravened a provision of the code of conduct, the code of conduct is admissible in evidence in disciplinary hearings, and proof that a licensee contravened or did not contravene the relevant provision of the code of conduct may be relied on as tending to establish or negate a matter that is in issue in the hearings.

<sup>3</sup> Section 44 of the PMSO provides: “The Authority may do anything it considers appropriate for it to do for, or in relation to, the performance of its functions”.

## **Establishing a mechanism for handling emergencies**

**Code : A(1)** A licensed PMC has to, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it, establish a proper mechanism for handling emergencies. The mechanism has to contain the following elements:

- Identifying probable emergencies and conducting risk assessment;
- Formulating procedures and guidelines for handling emergencies;
- Appointing a person-in-charge for handling emergencies;
- Arranging drills;
- Establishing channels for communication with relevant supporting departments;
- Establishing channels for communication with clients<sup>4</sup>; and
- Keeping records.

### **Guide:**

a(1) A licensed PMC has to, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it, establish a proper mechanism for handling emergencies according to paragraph A(1) of the Code. The mechanism has to include the elements set out in the Code and should include other appropriate elements according to the actual situation.

## **Identifying probable emergencies and conducting risk assessment**

**Code : B(1)** A licensed PMC has to, so far as reasonably practicable, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it, identify probable emergencies and conduct relevant risk assessments to discern its effects and to make appropriate arrangements in advance.

### **Guide:**

b(1) A licensed PMC should, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it, identify probable emergencies according to the practical situation (e.g. paying

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<sup>4</sup> The term “client” has the same meaning as defined in section 16 of the PMSO, i.e. “in relation to a property for which a licensed PMC provides property management services, means – (a) the owners’ organisation of the property; and (b) the owners of the property who pay or are liable to pay the management expenses in respect of the services”. According to such definition, a tenant is not a client.

attention to current affairs, media reports, situations on facility usage and maintenance, etc.) and conduct risk assessments.

### **Formulating procedures and guidelines for handling emergencies**

**Code : C(1)** A licensed PMC has to, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it:

- (a) formulate by itself procedures and guidelines (if there is no owners' organisation<sup>5</sup>) or
- (b) consult the owners' organisation (if any) and so far as reasonably practicable agree with it the respective procedures and guidelines<sup>6</sup> for handling emergencies.

#### **Guide:**

c(1) A licensed PMC should formulate procedures and guidelines for handling emergencies covering:

- (a) ordinary situations: setting up a 24-hour emergency hotline, regular inspection of escape routes and emergency exits, making sure fire doors are not blocked or locked up, regular inspection of public facilities for finding out abnormalities etc.;
- (b) occurrence of an emergency: emergency which can be handled by the PMC itself or emergency which requires the seeking of assistance; and
- (c) post-emergency issues: cordoning off affected facilities for maintenance, resuming normal services (e.g. lifts, fresh and flushing water and power supply) as soon as reasonably practicable, cleaning up after typhoon, writing incident reports, making insurance claims timely to insurance companies (if applicable), conducting review to strengthen the effectiveness

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<sup>5</sup> The term "owners' organisation" has the same meaning as defined by section 2 of the PMSO i.e. "in relation to a property, means an organisation (whether or not formed under the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344) (BMO) or a deed of mutual covenant) that is authorised to act on behalf of all the owners of the property".

<sup>6</sup> The guideline or guide does not affect a licensed PMC as the manager to carry out its duties according to the BMO or the deed of mutual covenant of the respective property. The term "manager" has the same meaning as that defined by section 34D of the BMO.

of handling emergencies, etc.

### **Appointing a person-in-charge for handling emergencies**

**Code : D(1)** A licensed PMC has to, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it, appoint a licensed property management practitioner (person-in-charge) to coordinate and supervise the handling of emergencies, and conduct review after an emergency.

#### **Guide:**

d(1) A licensed PMC may appoint a licensed Property Management Practitioner (Tier 1) or a licensed Property Management Practitioner (Tier 2) as the person-in-charge and notify its relevant staff members of the appointment in writing (including by email or other electronic means); and provide the details and contact phone number of the person-in-charge for appropriate communication upon occurrence of emergency.

### **Arranging drills**

**Code : E(1)** A licensed PMC has to arrange drills timely for its staff members, clients and relevant persons (e.g. tenants) on dealing with emergencies.

#### **Guide:**

e(1) A licensed PMC should, as far as practicable:

- (a) arrange for drills timely for its staff members, clients and relevant persons on dealing with emergencies (e.g. annual fire drills together with the Fire Services Department);
- (b) notify its clients and relevant persons timely on the prevention and handling of emergencies (e.g. fire escape<sup>7</sup> or precautionary measures during typhoons<sup>8</sup>) by displaying notices at prominent place in the property, and

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<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the information on Fire Escape provided by the Fire Services Department [https://www.hkfsd.gov.hk/eng/cep\\_edu/cep/cep\\_3skill\\_index/cep\\_3skill\\_escape/fire\\_escape.html](https://www.hkfsd.gov.hk/eng/cep_edu/cep/cep_3skill_index/cep_3skill_escape/fire_escape.html)

<sup>8</sup> Please refer to the information on Precautionary measures for Public and Buildings Safety during Typhoon Season provided to PMCs by the Buildings Department ([https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/practice-notes-and-circular-letters/circular/CL\\_PMPBSTS2022e.pdf](https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/practice-notes-and-circular-letters/circular/CL_PMPBSTS2022e.pdf))

provide the respective information through internal notices to its staff members.

### **Establishing channels for communication with relevant supporting departments**

**Code : F(1)** A licensed PMC has to establish proper communication channels with relevant Government departments and organizations (e.g. lift contractors, gas supplies companies) so that assistance can be sought as soon as possible when an emergency occurs.

#### **Guide:**

f(1) A licensed PMC should:

- (a) keep record of the contact information of relevant Government departments and organizations relating to emergencies;
- (b) provide, so far as reasonably practicable, the Government departments and organisations concerned with the particulars of contact information or the respective person-in-charge on emergencies and update the particulars timely (e.g. a change of the person-in-charge);
- (c) keep in touch with the Government departments and organisations concerned and update the contact information timely;
- (d) cooperate with the Government departments and organisations concerned for handling emergencies; and
- (e) provide the contact information of the Government departments and organisations concerned to its staff members for contact and communication.

### **Establishing channels for communication with clients**

**Code : G(1)** A licensed PMC has to, for the property for which PMSs are provided by it, establish proper channels for communication with its clients and relevant persons (e.g. tenants) so as to notify its clients and relevant persons as soon as possible, enabling them to make appropriate arrangements when an emergency occurs.

**Guide:**

g(1) A licensed PMC should:

- (a) keep record of the contact information of clients and relevant persons (e.g. tenants) so that they may be contacted directly for dealing with emergencies (e.g. suspected fire, flooding or gas leakage in an individual flat of a client);
- (b) keep in touch with clients and relevant persons (including setting up a social media group with clients and relevant persons for communication if necessary and under appropriate circumstances) and update contact information timely;
- (c) subject to the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) and relevant regulations, provide the contact information of clients and relevant persons to its staff members for communication when necessary;
- (d) so far as reasonably practicable:
  - (i) display notices on emergencies at prominent place in the property; and
  - (ii) set up a relevant website/mobile application (if applicable) for disseminating information on emergencies.

**Keeping records**

**Code : H(1)** A licensed PMC has to record the details of each individual case of emergency and properly keep the record, documents and information concerned for not less than three years.

**Guide:**

h(1) A licensed PMC should:

- (a) keep relevant records, documents and information which include e.g. information of the involved flats, affected persons, documents of concerned compensation (if any), photographs of affected conditions, etc.;
- (b) when necessary, make a copy of the record of the emergency so far as

reasonably practicable if the record is to be deleted automatically (e.g. CCTV footage);

- (c) make sure the records contain the name, position, signature of the recording officer and the date of recording for follow-up where necessary;
- (d) keep the records, documents and information properly in a suitable place;
- (e) upon written request made by respective authorities in accordance with the law, provide timely the relevant records, documents and information for their reference; and
- (f) upon written request made by owners' organisation (if any), provide timely so far as reasonably practicable, the relevant records, documents and information for their reference.

End

If there is any inconsistency between the Chinese version and the English version of this Guide, the Chinese version shall prevail.
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Related Code of Conduct

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