



The Police

The Hong Kong Police Force has distinguished itself as one of the oldest, yet most modern, police forces in the world.

Formed in 1842 with a total strength of 35, the Force evolved from an extremely broad-based role, embracing such matters as fire-fighting, prisons and immigration, to that of a traditional police service. As at May 1, 2006, the Force had a strength of 26 779 of which 13.4 per cent were women officers. It also had a backup of 4 848 civilian staff.

The Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force was originally formed in 1914 as a reserve to assist in times of natural disaster or civil emergency. As at March 31, 2006, 3 926 volunteer citizens supported the regular force to perform crowd control duties at public events and festivals. The ability to assist during times of emergency is retained.

Police in Hong Kong operate within the traditional constabulary concept of preserving life and property, preventing and detecting crime and keeping the peace, with a strong emphasis on enlisting community support. In times of emergency the Force has a paramilitary capability.

Structure: The Force is commanded by the Commissioner of Police who is assisted by two deputy Commissioners.

One deputy Commissioner supervises all operational matters and the other is responsible for the direction and coordination of the management of the Force, including personnel, training and management services.

The Force Headquarters is made up of five departments: Operations; Crime and Security; Personnel and Training; Management Services; and Finance, Administration and Planning. For day-to-day policing, the Force is organised into six regions: Hong Kong Island, Kowloon East, Kowloon West, New Territories North, New Territories South and Marine. The Regions are largely autonomous in their day-to-day operation and management matters, and each has its own headquarters which comprises administration and operation wings, and traffic and criminal investigation units. Each region is divided into districts and divisions and in a few cases sub-divisions. Currently there are 23 districts.

The policing of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the main towns of the New Territories follows a similar pattern.

Responsibility for law and order on the underground railway system, which runs through several police districts, is vested in the Mass Transit Railway District.

The Marine Region, with a fleet of over 145 launches and craft, patrols some 1850 square kilometres of waters within Hong Kong including the busy harbour and 244 outlying islands. This involves the control of some 13 000 local craft, pleasure boats and ferries and a maritime population of 14 100. Shore patrols are regularly mounted to maintain contact with inhabitants of small islands and isolated communities.

In addition to normal policing functions, the Marine Police fleet is also responsible for maintaining effective law and order within Hong Kong waters with particular emphasis on countering illegal immigration and smuggling at sea. Marine Region is also one of the main agencies in the Hong Kong search and rescue organisation geared towards maritime operations both within and outside Hong Kong waters.

Operations: Force operational matters are coordinated by the Operations Department, which comprises two wings, a traffic headquarters and six regions. The department is charged with the formulation and implementation of policies, the monitoring of activities and the efficient deployment of personnel and resources.

The Operations Wing coordinates counter terrorism, internal security, anti-illegal immigration measures, bomb disposal commitments and contingency planning for natural disasters and is also responsible for the Police Dog Unit.

The Police Tactical Unit (PTU) has an establishment of six companies (1020 officers). The PTU provides an immediate manpower reserve for use in any emergency. PTU companies are attached to all land Regions and are available for internal security, crowd management, anti-crime operations and disaster response duties throughout Hong Kong. The PTU also provides up-to-date instruction and training in internal security and crowd management techniques for a wide cross-section of Force members.

The Anti-Illegal Immigration Control Centre is responsible for collecting intelligence and monitoring operations in respect of illegal immigrants from the Mainland and Vietnam.

The Support Wing oversees the execution and staffing of operational support matters, including the formulation of operational policies for both the regular and auxiliary forces. It is also responsible for the various licensing functions of the Force. The coordination of all public relations activities is arranged through the Police Public Relations Branch.

The Traffic Headquarters is responsible for formulating Force priorities, policies and procedures on traffic matters, coordinates their implementation and monitors their effects. It processes all traffic prosecutions and collects and maintains traffic-related data. The Traffic Headquarters offers advice on traffic management matters, monitors local traffic schemes and new major infrastructure projects. It also formulates, supports and monitors road safety educational and enforcement programmes.

The Transport Division is responsible for the management and deployment of the Force vehicle fleet of approximately 2 500 vehicles, the driver establishment and the acquisition of new police vehicles. It also administers all policy matters relating to police transport requirements.

Crime and Security: The Crime and Security Department is responsible for the Force policy regarding the investigation of crimes and matters of a security nature. Crime Wing consists of a number of operational bureaux and specialized units. The operational bureaux deal with specific areas of criminal activity whereas the specialized units provide support services to operational units in the Force and deal with policy matters on various issues including child abuse, domestic violence and witness protection. Security Wing provides VIP protection and security co-ordination, including counter-terrorism and related training.

The Organised Crime and Triad Bureau (OCTB) investigates major organised and serious crime involving

all types of activities such as theft/smuggling of vehicles, human smuggling, firearms, vice, debt collection, syndicated gambling and extortion. It also investigates triad societies and their hierarchies with particular emphasis on their involvement in organised crime.

The Criminal Intelligence Bureau (CIB) is the Force's central coordinating body for intelligence on crime and criminality which, after analysis and assessment, is disseminated to crime investigation units as required. In addition, the CIB works closely with the OCTB and other Crime Wing bureaux in tackling triad and organised crime syndicates. To strengthen the criminal intelligence capability within the Force, the Bureau also organises related training courses and seminars for investigators.

The Commercial Crime Bureau investigates serious commercial and business fraud, computer-related crimes, the forgery of monetary instruments, identity documents and payment cards, and the counterfeiting of currency and coins. It liaises very closely with international law enforcement agencies on exchange of intelligence and in actioning requests for investigation from other jurisdictions alleging criminal conduct in relation to commercial transactions.

The Narcotics Bureau investigates serious drug cases such as importation and manufacture of illicit drugs, and gathers intelligence in relation to major drug activities. It also conducts investigations in partnership with overseas law enforcement agencies whenever there is a Hong Kong connection to international drug trafficking. The Bureau is also responsible for financial investigations arising out of the Drug Trafficking (Recovery of Proceeds) Ordinance, Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance and the United Nations (Anti-Terrorism Measures) Ordinance.

The Liaison Bureau coordinates all police-related inquiries from overseas police organisations and local consular officials. It also represents the Force in the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) as a sub-bureau of the China National Central Bureau.

The Crime Prevention Bureau provides advisory security services to the Government, commerce and industry, and the public in general.

The Support Group is made up of units which provide a technical and professional service to support criminal investigation, including the Criminal Records Bureau, the Identification Bureau, the Forensic Firearms Examination Bureau, the Witness Protection Unit and the Child Protection Policy Unit. The Group also fulfils a liaison responsibility for the Forensic Pathology Service and the Forensic Science Division of the Government Laboratory.

Day-to-day regional police operations are coordinated at the four regional command and control centres which are computer-assisted. They serve as information centres, monitoring all events in the regions and keeping police headquarters and other government departments informed, and provide additional resources and specialist services when required. Regular patrols are carried out by Uniform Branch beat constables and vehicles of the Emergency Units. Response time in emergencies is kept to an absolute minimum by means of a beat radio system which enables close contact with regional controllers and all patrol officers.

Regional traffic units are responsible for road accident investigation, road safety and day-to-day traffic enforcement. A Traffic Warden Corps assists in enforcing laws relating to parking offences and in regulating traffic.

Personnel and Training: The Personnel Wing is responsible for all core human resource management functions, including recruitment, promotion, career development, conditions of service, staff relations and welfare matters.

The Police College sets the overall training policy and coordinates all Force-wide training courses. Recruit

and continuation training, criminal investigation training, police driving and traffic training, weapon tactics training and periodic courses on firearms and first aid are provided at the Aberdeen and Fanling campus of the College.

Information technology training, command training, local and overseas management training as well as other specialist courses are also provided by the Police College.

Management Services: The Information Systems Wing has two branches and one bureau dealing with communications, information technology and business services.

The Communications Branch designs, acquires, examines and maintains all Force communications networks and equipment including radio, video, navigational aids, speed detection radar, mobile phones, pagers, office telephones and mini firing range equipment.

The Information Technology Branch is responsible for the planning, development, implementation, operation and maintenance of information technology systems. It has over 10 000 terminals installed throughout Hong Kong supporting the Force in the spheres of command and control, criminal records, crime intelligence analysis, fingerprint identification, reports to Police, human and financial resources planning and management, transport management, licensing, and e-mail.

The Business Services Bureau coordinates the business needs of the five departments of the Force. It consists of the Business Services Division, the e-Police Division and the Major Systems Division which acts as the System 'Owner' for systems used Force-wide.

The Service Quality Wing is responsible for spearheading initiatives to improve services provided to Force customers both external and internal. The Wing comprises two branches: Research and Inspections Branch (RIB) and Complaints and Internal Investigations Branch (C&IIB). The Wing is responsible for implementing the Force Strategy on Service Quality which aims at promoting efficiency, effectiveness and economy, whilst pursuing continuous improvement, by identifying issues which may have strategic policy significance and conducting research and inspections to seek out the best practice. The C&IIB includes the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) and the Internal Investigations Office (IIO). CAPO oversees the investigation and successful resolution of all complaints made both externally and internally against members of the Force. The work of CAPO is closely monitored by the independent Police Complaints Council to ensure that all complaints against Police are fully and impartially investigated. IIO is responsible for the investigation and monitoring of allegations of serious misconduct and corrupt activities against members of the Force.

Finance, Administration and Planning: The Finance Wing is responsible for the financial management, stores and internal audit of the Force. The Administration Wing is responsible for civilian staff, Force establishment matters and the management of the Police Museum. The Planning and Development Branch (P&D) is responsible for the planning and development of new police buildings/facilities. Major building projects completed last year include the police post at the Penny's Bay Disneyland Theme Park which was commissioned in July 2005 and the New Territories South Regional Headquarters in October 2005. In March 2006, the construction of Marine Outer Waters District and Marine North Police Division was also completed. P&D is also involved in planning the police facilities in the Boundary Crossing Points at the East Rail Extension of Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and Dongjiaotou in Shekou, which are scheduled for completion in late 2006 and early 2007 respectively.