6 Fire Rescue Divers Killed In The Line Of Duty During Water Rescue

https://www.firefighterclosecalls.com/6-fire-rescue-divers-killed-in-the-line-of-duty-during-water-rescue/

October 4, 2018

We regret to pass on that 6 fire and rescue department divers in Malaysia died in the Line of Duty. This occurred during a rescue operation for a teenager who is feared to have drowned after falling into a mining pond on Wednesday (Oct 3).

The divers were caught in a strong “whirlpool” during the operation in Puchong, a town on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

It was drizzling when the divers went into the pond at 2115 hours to rescue the 17-year-old boy. The team had followed standard operating procedures in donning complete diving equipment and were tied to a single rope.
Suddenly a violent current/whirlpool occurred in the water, causing all the fire rescue divers to spin in the water while all their equipment came off.

The divers struggled in the water for about 30 minutes while other fire rescue members tried to rescue them. All of them were unconscious when they were eventually pulled out of the water. All life saving measures were attempted, but unsuccessful.

Here’s What Happened to 6 Firemen Who Drowned While Finding Missing Teen in Puchong


October 4, 2018  By Ling Kwan

On the night of 3 October, the nation was shocked by news of six firemen who drowned while carrying out a search and rescue operation. This heartbreaking incident took place at a mining pond in Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong.

According to NST and Harian Metro, the operation was to search for a 17-year-old teenager, Mohd Ilham Fahmy who was believed to have slipped and fallen into the mining pond in the evening. It was understood that the teen had gone there with his two friends for fishing activities. The local residents quickly alerted the Fire and Rescue Department when they learnt about the mishap. Six firemen from the Water Rescue Unit then dived into the water to look for the victim shortly after.

Five minutes into the operation, the current suddenly surged and all the divers were entangled by their safety ropes, which were believed to have caused their diving equipment to come off.
Sepang district police chief Assistant Commissioner Abdul Aziz Ali said a few firemen on standby saw the divers struggling in the water and tried to pull them out but the current was just too strong.

The first diver was only pulled out after 30 minutes.

“When they were brought out (of the water), all six of them were unconscious. The paramedics at the scene performed CPR for 30 minutes but none of the victims gave any response and they were pronounced dead later,” Abdul Aziz said.

The fallen firemen are:
- Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34
- Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32
- Mazlan Omarbaki, 25
- Yahya Ali, 24
- Adnan Othman, 33
- Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25

The bodies have been sent to Serdang Hospital for post-mortem. This news also shocked the missing teenager’s father, Mohd Azzam Naim who didn’t expect the tragedy to take a turn for the worse.

It was learnt that he had advised his son not to go there anymore especially after two men had drowned two months ago while fishing there. Moreover, it’s rainy season now and strong current is expected. Sadly, the teen didn’t take his father’s advice seriously.
At the time of writing, the teen’s body has yet to be found.

Our thoughts and prayers go to the family of the deceased and we salute the unsung heroes for their service and dedication. RIP.

Source: Facebook
Six Rescue Divers In Malaysia Drown While Searching For Missing Teen


04 Oct 2018 Source: Bernama/de/ad/na

KUALA LUMPUR: Six fire and rescue department divers in Malaysia died during a rescue mission for a teen who is feared to have drowned after falling into a mining pond on Wednesday (Oct 3).

The divers were caught in a strong "whirlpool" during the operation in Puchong, a town on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, said Sepang district police chief Assistant Commissioner (ACP) Abdul Aziz Ali.

He said it was drizzling when the divers went into the pond at 9.15pm to rescue the 17-year-old boy.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation was administered by a medical team on the six divers but failed. (Photo: Bernama)
The team had followed standard operating procedures in donning complete diving equipment and were tied to a single rope, said ACP Abdul Aziz.

The divers were caught in a "whirlpool" during the operation, says the Sepang district police chief.

"Suddenly a strong current occurred in the area, causing all victims to spin in the water while all their equipment came off," he said.

The divers struggled in the water for about 30 minutes while other personnel tried to rescue them. However, all of them were unconscious when they were pulled out of the water.

Selangor Fire and Rescue Department chief Azmi Osman said cardiopulmonary resuscitation was administered by a medical team on the victims but failed.

“All six were pronounced dead,” he said.

The divers have been identified as Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34; Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32; Mazlan Omrbaki, 25, and Yahya Ali, 24, from the Water Rescue Unit of the Port Klang Fire and Rescue station.

The other two victims, identified as Adnan Othman, 33, and Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25, were members of the Water Rescue Unit from the Shah Alam Fire and Rescue station.

The teen has yet to be found. He was said to have been fishing by the banks of the pond with two friends when he slipped and fell into the pond.

ACP Abdul Aziz said the search and rescue operation to locate the teenager will resume at 7.30am on Thursday.

Fire and Rescue Department director-general Mohammad Hamdan Wahid told reporters that there have been few fatal incidents involving firefighters in Malaysia.

"This is the first time (six personnel died). There was one previous case when we lost two members of the department,” he said.
The bodies of the six divers arriving at Shah Alam Fire Station on Thursday morning. (Photo: Bernama)

THIS IS A VERY SAD DAY FOR US"

"We carried out CPR but could not save them and this is a very sad day for us. One which involved so many of our employees."

Mohammad Hamdan said the department would look into the welfare of the divers’ families, including compensation and insurance.

He said the hospital’s forensic department will carry out post-mortem examinations on the victims. The bodies will then be taken to the Shah Alam Fire and Rescue station for a funeral prayer session before being taken to their respective hometowns for burial.

COMING TO TERMS WITH TRAGEDY

Families of the deceased divers were still coming to terms with their loss, the Fire and Rescue Department said.

The wife of one of the divers, Adnan Othman, said she received a call about his death at 11pm.
“I was informed about what happened by his friend. I was at home then,” said Shamiza Salleh, 32. She then broke down and declined to say more.

The wife of Izatul Akma said she was informed of her husband’s death when the department's personnel visited her home at around midnight.

"I thought my husband was involved in an accident, instead he had drowned. It seemed like I was in a dream. I saw him early yesterday morning before he left for work," said Rosmaria Abdul Ramli, 32.

The mother of three added that her husband sent a message at 7pm to inform her about the rescue operation.

Meanwhile, the widow of Mohammad Fattah said she dreamed of her husband’s death just two weeks ago.

"I told my husband about the dream but he just laughed it off. I never thought it would become a reality," said Nur Nadia Kamarudin, 29, mother of two.
For Noratikah Shaari, 28, who is the sister of Muhammad Hifdzul, she said that her brother would normally give updates of any operation he would be a part of. However, he did not do so on the day of the incident.

She added that her brother was always interested in the unit, and had even said that he would be happy if he were to die while on duty.

**Bomba Community Grief-Stricken, Diver Unit Tragedy First In History Of Dept**


Thursday, 4 Oct 2018

SERDANG (Bernama): The tragedy of six divers of the Fire and Rescue Department (JPBM) Water Rescue Unit (PPDA) who drowned during a search and rescue operation (SAR) is the first in the history of the department.

JPBM director-general Mohammad Hamdan Wahid when met at Serdang Hospital here said that before this SAR operation, there were few fatal incidents involving firemen.

"This is the first time as many as six personnel died. There was one previous case when we lost two members of the department.

"We carried out CPR but could not save them and this is a very sad day for us. One which involved so many of our employees," he said.

Six PPDA divers died when conducting an SAR operation at 9.15pm on Wednesday (Oct 3) for a teenager who fell into a disused mining pool at Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong near here and was feared drowned.

Mohammad Hamdan said JBPM would look at every aspect of the welfare of the families of the victims including in terms of compensation and insurance. He said the Serdang Hospital Forensic Department was currently carrying out post-mortems on all victims.

He said after the completion of the post-mortems, all the remains would be taken to the Shah Alam Fire and Rescue station for the final tribute before being taken home to their respective hometowns for burial.
The six divers who drowned were identified as Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34, Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32, Mazlan Ombarki, 25, and Yahya Ali, 24, from the Water Rescue Team (PPDA) of the Port Klang Fire and Rescue station.

The other two victims, identified as Adnan Othman, 33, and Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25, were members of PPDA team from the Shah Alam Fire and Rescue station.

He said the victims hailed from Sibu, Sarawak; Tawau, Sabah; Kelantan; Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan and from Shah Alam, Selangor.

Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin and Balakong assemblyman Wong Siew Ki were also at the hospital to comfort the family members of the victims.

Meanwhile, Shamiza Salleh, 32, the wife of Adnan Othman, said she received a call on the tragedy at 11pm. "I was informed about what happened by his friend (Adnan's). I was at home then," she said.

She broke down after that and was unable to say anything more. - Bernama

**Found: Body Of Teen Whose Rescue Operation Saw Six Firemen Drown**


October 4, 2018 By Fazrik Kamarudin and Nurul Hidayah Bahaudin -

PUCHONG: The body of the teenager whose rescue operation led to the drowning of six firemen on Wednesday was recovered from the mining pool here where the tragedy took place.

The body of 17-year-old Muhammad Ilham Fahmy Muhammad Azzam was found about 5.45pm, floating some 800m from where he was reported to have fallen into the pool in Taman Putra Perdana.

His father, Muhammad...
Azzam Naim, identified his body before it was taken to the Serdang Hospital mortuary.

Azzam, when met at the scene, thanked the authorities involved in the search and rescue (SAR) operation. “I am glad that my son has been found. Although sad, I’m relieved his body was in good condition,” said the 46-year-old.

Azzam said the family planned to bury Ilham at the Taman Putra Perdana Muslim ceremony the same night. “The funeral arrangements are underway,” he said.

Meanwhile, Sepang police chief Assistant Commissioner Abdul Aziz Ali said various methods were used in looking for Ilham’s body, including diving, water surface rescue and water pumping. Rescuers also used dogs to try to find the body. “After 24 hours, the victim was found some 800m from where he was reported missing. The victim was dressed only in pants.

“He was found floating at a location by the firefighters who were assessing the area with our K9 (dog) unit,” he told reporters.

Upon discovering the body, said Aziz, firemen deployed boats to retrieve it from the water.

“The body was identified by the victim’s father before he was sent to Serdang Hospital to determine cause of death. The case has been classified as sudden death, however, further investigation are being conducted, including to record statements from the victim’s two friends who were at the scene during the incident,” he said.

Aziz said the SAR operation was called off at 6.30pm and expressed his gratitude to all agencies involved.

Six Fire and Rescue Department water rescue unit members — Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34, Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32, Mazlan Omarbaki, 25, Yahya Ali, 24, Adnan Othman, 33, and 25-year-old Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari — were killed during Wednesday’s operation.

They drowned while looking for Ilham at a weir.

**Drowning Tragedy: Selangor Govt Orders Closure Of Mining Pool**


Thursday, 4 Oct 2018

**SHAH ALAM** (Bernama): The Selangor Government has ordered the Sepang Municipal Council to close down the mining pool in Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong once the search-and-rescue (SAR) operations for the teenager who was reported drowned there is completed.
Selangor Menteri Besar Amirudin Shari said the closure was necessary following several drowning cases reported in the area, with the latest involving six firefighters who were part of the SAR operations last night.

“I received a report that this (drowning at the mining pool) was not the first, and I have instructed the Sepang Municipal Council to increase security surveillance, including closing off the area.

“The closure will take effect as soon as the SAR operations, now being conducted there, are completed,” he told reporters after meeting the family members of the firefighters at the Fire and Rescue Station in Section 15 here Thursday (Oct 4).

Also present was Director-General of the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department Mohamad Hamdan Wahid.

Amirudin said he also ordered the municipal council to close the route to the mining pool which was a popular fishing site.

"I understand that there is a jetty there leading to the mining pool which is now being upgraded to become a water catchment site.

“...and the jetty is not for fishing purposes, if the members of the public want to fish, I advise them to find a safer location,” he said.
Amirudin also said the Selangor government had agreed to contribute RM20,000 to each family of the firefighters who died in the incident.

He said the contribution was to honour them and to lighten the burden faced by their families.

"I represent the state government in conveying my condolences to the family members of the firefighters who died.

"We appreciate their contributions and sacrifices and hope this will lighten their burden," he said.

Earlier, final funeral rites were performed on the bodies of the six firefighters from the Fire and Rescue Department Department's Water Rescue Unit (PPDA) at the Fire and Rescue Station in Section 15 at about 9 am.

Two of them were from the Shah Alam fire station while four others were from the Port Klang fire station. – Bernama

500 Attend Funeral Prayers For Drowned Bomba Divers


Thursday, 4 Oct 2018 By Allison Lai
SHAH ALAM: A simple yet solemn solat jenazah (prayer for the departed) was held for the six divers of the Fire and Rescue Department (JPBM) Water Rescue Unit who drowned while on a mission to rescue a teenager.

The ceremony which was attended by some 500 family members and personnel from the Fire and Rescue Services Department, was held at the Seksyen 15 fire station here at about 8.45am Thursday (Oct 4).

All caskets were draped with the national flag, the Jalur Gemilang, and arrived in six vans before being sent back to their respective hometowns for burial.

Fire and Rescue Department director-general Mohammad Hamdan Wahid and Selangor Mentri Besar Amirudin Shari were present to convey their condolences to the affected families.

Amirudin said that each of the family of the deceased would receive RM20,000 from the state's Tabung Wira and Pahlawan.

Four of the firemen were from the Port Klang fire station. They are Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34, Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32, Mazlan Omarbaki, 25, and Yahya Ali, 24.

Two others, Adnan Othman, 33, and Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25, were from the Shah Alam fire station.

The victims hailed from Negri Sembilan, Sabah, Sarawak, Pahang and Kelantan.

All six personnel, who were part of the rescue diving unit, were dragged away by strong currents during the 9pm incident on Wednesday (Oct 3).

The personnel were searching for a 17-year-old boy who is believed to have fallen into the mining pool at around 5.50pm on Wednesday.

It was learnt the boy and two others were fishing at the mining pool when he fell in.

The two frantically sought help from residents nearby to rescue their friend.

Selangor Fire and Rescue Department director Azmi Osman said they managed to retrieve the six personnel and administered CPR in an attempt to resuscitate them.

"The personnel however did not respond and were pronounced dead.

Hundreds pay respects to Port Dickson fireman killed trying to save teenager

04 Oct 2018 By Amir Yusof @AmirYusofCNA

LUKUT, Port Dickson: The sombre mood outside Mr Adnan Othman's terrace home in Lukut was palpable on Thursday morning (Oct 4).
Besides some sniffling and muffled voices, the small corridor packed with hundreds of his friends, family and fellow firefighters was largely silent as they queued to see Mr Adnan's body for one last time.

He was one of six firefighters who tragically drowned after they were caught in a whirlpool while searching for a missing teenager in a mining pond at Taman Putra Perdana in Selangor on Wednesday.

"There's no fireman quite like Adnan," said a colleague from his Water Rescue Unit at the Shah Alam Fire and Rescue station. "He (faces) up to danger and isn't scared to risk his life for others."

Mr Adnan leaves behind a wife and two young daughters - aged three and five.

Mr Adnan's cousin, who declined to be named, told Channel NewsAsia that the family was in a state of shock.

"It hasn't sunk in yet that he's gone. We are not thinking about the cause of the incident or compensation or whatever, we just want to get through his funeral safe and sound, god willing."

Among those who were present at his funeral were election candidates for the Port Dickson by-election - Mr Isa Samad and Mr Saiful Bukhari, who are independent candidates.

Mr Saiful said: "The good deeds (of all six firefighters) were too big for us. I hope the families remain strong and accept what God has fated for them."
Parti Islam Se-Malaysia candidate Mohd Nazari Mokhtar and Parti Keadilan Rakyat's communications director Fahmy Fadzil were at the mosque in Lukut to perform funeral prayers for Mr Adnan.

Speaking to reporters at the mosque, Mr Fahmy, who was representing PKR candidate Anwar Ibrahim, urged netizens not to speculate on the cause of the incident and to wait for a formal statement from the authorities.

"I urge netizens and members of the media not to share a supposed video which showcased the last seconds of the six warriors during the rescue mission last night. Let's respect and give the families of the six firefighters some space to grieve," said Mr Fahmy.

PKR president-elect Anwar visited Mr Adnan's family after the burial at their home in Taman Jaya.

In a Twitter post earlier on Thursday morning, Mr Anwar paid tribute to all six firemen who were killed. "My condolences to those who lost their lives during the rescue mission. You are all heroes and warriors," he wrote.

**Malaysian Rescue Divers Who Drowned During Search Mission Complied With Sops**
04 Oct 2018 Source: Bernama/ic(aj)

The six divers were caught in a strong "whirlpool" during the operation. (Photo: Bernama)
SHAH ALAM, Selangor: The six fire and rescue personnel who drowned while searching for a missing teenager in a mining pond on Wednesday (Oct 3) had complied with the stipulated standard operating procedures (SOP), an official said on Thursday.

Although it was dark at the time of the rescue mission, the search and rescue mission was not called off as the water was not deep, the official said.

"Checks by the department found that they had complied with the necessary SOP and strategy," Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) director-general Mohammad Hamdan Wahid told reporters after the funeral prayers for the six firefighters. "If it was a planned task, we could call it off, but the task involved a search for a human. (In such a situation) if the condition allows, we carry on, even at night," he added.

Mohammad Hamdan said the department would review the SOP, with a view to improving it, to prevent a similar incident.

He said preliminary investigations at the scene found that the pond was not suitable for recreational activities.

"There is a waterfall and at the foot of the waterfall was where the search and rescue mission was conducted. When they (fire and rescue personnel) went towards the waterfall, the undercurrent was strong and there are also rocks placed there as water breakers.

"We believe they must have stepped on the rocks and because of the strong undercurrent, one of them could have slipped and the others were pulled by him as they were in a human chain.

"They were in the water for about 10 minutes and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) was given to them when they were brought up to the surface, but they could not be saved," he added. He said further investigations would be carried out.

The six men included Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34; Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32; Mazlan Omarbaki, 25; and Yahya Ali, 24, who were from the Port Klang Fire and Rescue Station.

The remaining two, Adnan Othman, 33, and Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25, were from the Shah Alam Fire and Rescue Station.
Malaysiabomba’s Widow: “I Didn’t Expect Nightmare About Husband’s Death 2 Weeks Ago To Become Reality”
October 4, 2018 By Veronica Elankovan

RIP to all of the firemen.

Today (4 October 2018), the mourning widow of one of the perished firemen shared some last moments she had with her husband, Mohd Fatah Hashim before he passed away tragically.

Noor Nadia Kamaludin, 29, shared that two weeks ago she actually dreamt about her late husband passing away. However, he just brushed off the matter as unimportant by just laughing at her nightmare.

Nonetheless, the grieving widow is now heartbroken because she didn’t expect her nightmare would “come true”, reported The Star.
She was quoted as saying:

“I dreamed about him passing away two weeks ago. He didn’t say anything then. I didn’t expect my dream to become a reality.”

Talking to the reporters after the funeral prayers at Section 15 fire station, Nadia said she only learnt about her husband’s death at 10pm yesterday.

The doleful widow said that her husband’s acted strangely before the occurrence of the tragedy.

Nadia continued, “He did not talk from morning till night a day before the tragedy happened.

Next morning he went to work and came back home at noon for kuih.”

“He acted strangely when he called for our kids and kissed them. I last saw him at 11am.”

Fatah, who had served in the Fire and Rescue Department’s water rescue unit for seven years, leaves behind a three-year-old daughter and a...
one-year-old son upon his demise as well. The report revealed that the 34-year-old will be buried today, in Beserah, Kuantan. *May his soul rest in peace.*

We extend our condolences to Fatah’s family and all the other firemen’s family too, we hope that they find strength during this trying time. Stay strong.

**Death of 6 firemen in Puchong was 'one in a million' incident:**

*Official*


05 Oct 2018 Source: Bernama/CNA/nc(aj)

PUTRAJAYA: The incident that claimed the lives of six Malaysian fire and rescue department (JBPM) divers who died while searching for a teenager in a mining pool was an unforeseeable, "one in a million" incident, a Malaysian official said on Friday (Oct 5).

All the divers were qualified and had "strictly" adhered to standard operation procedures, housing and local government deputy minister Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah Raja Ahmad said in a press conference.

"This is a one in a million incident which took place in a small area, with a water level that can be considered as shallow. It was also beyond anyone’s expectation and control," the New Straits Times quoted him as saying.

"(They were) still young. Logically, they had the capability to fight and survive if not because of the tremendous unforeseeable circumstances that occurred."

Echoing this, the Malaysian fire and rescue department's director-general Mohamad Hamdan Wahid said the firemen had conducted required assessments at the scene at Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong before starting search and rescue operations.

"They proceeded because they felt safe, nonetheless the accident occurred, it was caused by the tactical or topographical factor of the place," he said.
Housing and local government deputy minister Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah Raja Ahmad (centre) in Putrajaya. (Photo: Bernama)

"They had done a good job, it was just that one of them missed his footing and the very strong undercurrents caused them to (get) tangled and struggle with their equipment for about 10 minutes ... but we do not know the incident in detail."

Describing the incident as the most tragic in the history of JBPM - after the loss of two water rescue unit members believed to have drowned in Pulau Sembilan in 2000 - he said further investigations would be made to study any weaknesses.

Mohamad Hamdan said an investigation at the ministry level had also been set up.

The scope of the investigation, among others, would be to include matters that needed to be improved to ensure that standard operating procedures' planning, action and enforcement would not have a negative impact on both victims and rescuers.

In addition, all JBPM premises will fly flags at half-mast for three days from Friday as a symbol of mourning, he said.

Raja Kamarul Bahrain made a working visit to the JBPM headquarters in Putrajaya on Friday.

Following a series of drowning events occurring in mining areas, he called on the local authorities to place warning signs that could be easily noticed at risky areas. He also called on parents to ensure their children did not wander to dangerous places.
Saturday, 6 Oct 2018 by andrew sia

PETALING JAYA: Better training to assess risky situations before jumping in could have saved the lives of the six brave and dedicated firemen who drowned during an attempted rescue at an old mining pool in Puchong, Selangor, said a water rescue specialist.

"The first step in conducting any rescue is a 'scene size up' where you consider all the factors and do a risk-benefit analysis.

"Was it a rescue or a body recovery?" explained Chan Yuen-Li, the regional director (South-East Asia) for Rescue 3 International, the world's leading provider of technical rescue training.

"When no visible victim can be seen with their head above water, it's clearly not an urgent operation to save someone's life."

"The sad reality is that this was a most likely a situation to recover a (dead) body. So there was really no reason to rush into what looks like a hastily planned rescue at night when the water level was rising."They could have waited till day time, or when water levels stabilised or when they had more equipment and personnel,"
said Chan, while also addressing online discussions that the firemen should have had "better" equipment.

She emphasized that there is "no doubt about the bravery of the six firemen." "I absolutely honour their dedication to duty and my heart goes out to their families."

However, it is her "fervent wish that from their sacrifice", Malaysia will learn the lessons and look into possible weaknesses of rescue training.

"This is so that we can not only produce people with great heart, but also with wide knowledge and critical thinking skills," said Chan, who is also the managing director of Nomad Adventure.

Apart from a better risk assessment, knowledge of two other crucial factors could have saved the firemen's lives.

Firstly, how dangerous low dams (weirs) are, and secondly, the golden rule of never tying a rope around a rescuer.

Chan, who has been a swift water rescue instructor since 2008, explained that, from a purported video of the incident circulating online, the six firemen were verbally told to go towards the low dam (weir) and were even being pulled into it on purpose by rescuers upstream.

She said that if the video is a genuine depiction of the rescue, then it is a no-no because, among rescue trainers, it is well known that a low dam is one of the most treacherous man-made hazards in moving water.

This is because they create uniform recirculating currents that trap swimmers (unlike a natural waterfall, where the current is broken up by rocks).

"So even though the water drop is not very high, it's a total uniform flow across the channel.

"Once you are caught in such recirculating water, it's very hard to get out, and you are also trapped by the channel's banks at the side," explained Chan, who added that she covers this topic in every one of the swift water rescue courses she has taught in Malaysia.

She said the fact that the six firemen failed to identify this low dam hazard suggests a gap or shortfall in their training.

As such, she "respectfully disagreed" with the statement by the Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister, Datuk Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah Raja Ahmad, today (Oct 6) that it was "a one in a million situation beyond anyone's control".
Chan also explained that there are 15 well-documented "golden rules" for swift water rescue, and one of them is: never tie a rope around a rescuer.

On Friday (Oct 5) the Fire and Rescue Department's director-general Mohammad Hamdan Wahid said that the rescue operation had followed standard operating procedure (SOP).

"It was an accident following difficulties encountered by the personnel during the challenging rescue situation," he told the media.

"Strategy-wise, the operation was in line with the SOP.

There is a flowing stream of water from the floodgate to control water at the pool.

"The rescue operation took place at the foot of the flowing stream. One of the firemen slipped and fell with the others while they were performing the human chain sweeping with ropes and buoys.

"The water was not deep but the undercurrents were strong due to the rain earlier," Hamdan said, adding that the department would conduct a thorough investigation.

However, for Chan, this actually showed why the "golden rule" of not tying a rope around a rescuer should have been followed because it looked like when one of them slipped, he dragged the others in.

"This tragedy is going to be a worldwide case study that highlights what can go wrong when rescuers are tied to a rope," she said.

A proper risk assessment would have suggested that the firemen make "the hardest decision" to cancel or postpone the rescue.

"It may seem like a harsh decision to make, but rescuers have to think logically not emotionally, that's part of the training," said Chan, who is also a former journalist at The Star.

She recalled that she was once in a course with two fire chiefs from the Philippines, who wanted to learn how to save people in typhoon disasters.

They failed one test, because they were too gung-ho and just wanted to jump in to do the rescue, even though it was too risky and could endanger the team.

"That was a powerful lesson for me that sometimes you just have to say no." She explained that even if the victim could be seen, the firemen should still not have gone in for a "water contact" rescue at the low dam.

Instead, given the dangers, they should have done an "above water" rescue. "They could have rigged ropes to pluck the person out, or thrown a float attached to a rope from downstream, and then pulled him out of the swirling water."
Another common method, she said, is to use inflated fire hoses, float it to the victim, snag him and then pull him out.

In another report, Hamdan had also explained that the six firemen received centralised training at the Terengganu Safety Training Centre (TSTC).

But for Chan, she said she herself had conducted a swift water rescue course for firemen before, and from what she knew about the training system, several questions remain.

One of these is that while they may have been drilled in certain skills in a centralised training site, were they trained to use those skills in real-world scenarios?

She explained that at a Rescue 3 International conference in the United States, various people shared their best practices from around the world.

"In the USA, the trainers go around to different fire departments all over the country and work with what resources they have (which may be limited), and identify the local hazards. This is because a rescue in Alaska is different from rescue in Florida."

"Local knowledge is a strength. So rescuers in the USA will identify local danger spots where say, homeless kids may jump into the water.

"They go out to recce (survey) and identify danger spots, and prepare rescue plans. For example, where they can rig their rescue ropes at both high and low water levels,

"This was shared in a talk by the LA (Los Angeles) fire department," said Chan, adding that the training also included preparing a backup Plan B in case Plan A goes wrong.

Hamdan had also admitted that the mining pool was meant for irrigation management and access to it should have been curtailed.

Chan said this is not a matter of "glorifying" what foreigners do, but learning from best practices around the world.

"In my first rescue training in the early 1990s, this Australian guy told us about a case where several firemen saw a lifejacket going round and round in a low dam. "Thinking that the victim was there, they went into the water. But several of them also drowned. This has happened before and we should learn from experiences overseas."
She underlined that the current training for Malaysian firemen is commendable because the firemen were courageous and dedicated to their duty and had a strong spirit of service.

"They deserve to be honoured for this," emphasised Chan. "However to ensure that their sacrifice is not in vain, we should review how effective their training was in terms of building the thinking skills necessary for risk assessment, advance planning, judgment of situations and resource management.

In short, all the skills necessary to manage a rescue.

"This is one of the worst disasters the country's emergency services have ever experienced and it has attracted worldwide attention and national mourning," said Chan.

"I very much appreciate the director general (of the Fire and Rescue Services Department) is willing to look into improving weaknesses in the system. That is responsible leadership.

"The best way to honour the sacrifice of the six brave firemen is to openly and neutrally review all the factors that contributed to these rescuers becoming victims themselves."

It’s A Tragedy Beyond Anyone’s Control
6 Oct 2018 by joseph kaos jr, m. mageswari, allison lai, and grace chen

PUTRAJAYA: The Puchong mining pool tragedy that claimed the lives of six well-trained firemen was a “one in a million” occurrence, says Datuk Raja Kamarul Bahrain Shah Raja Ahmad.

The Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister said the six, who were members of the Water Rescue Unit (PPDA), were well-qualified to conduct search and rescue operations.

He said as they were young and fit with the oldest being 34, they were more than capable to handle the conditions.

“But the circumstances were such that this was a one in a million situation beyond anyone’s control. “They did everything they could to the best of their abilities,” said Raja.

The six firemen were Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34, Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32, Mazlan Omurbaki, 25, and Yahya Ali, 24, all from the Port Klang fire station, as well as Adnan Othman, 33, and Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25, from the Shah Alam station.
They were on a search and rescue mission for a teenager who fell into a disused mining pool at Taman Putra Perdana when they were dragged down by strong currents at about 9pm.

Fire and Rescue Department director-general Mohd Hamdan Wahid said there was no question the six were more than qualified to carry out the search and rescue mission.

He said as members of the PPDA, they were trained according to the requirements of the PPDA including attending the Public Safety Diver training course.

“Only upon completion of the special course are PPDA members eligible to receive their PPDA allowances, which have been set by the government.

“Every PPDA member has a log book to show that they have undergone the required training every month.

“They will be denied their allowances if they fail to adhere to this procedure, and would not be allowed to conduct rescue missions,” he said and added that the department has 500 trained divers including the six.

“The six are not your ordinary rescuers. Those who are qualified to PPDA are a special bunch, not everyone can do it.

“The divers are trained at the Terengganu Safety Training Centre (TSTC), an internationally recognised centre for safety and emergency training,” he said.
While the firemen performed a human chain sweeping with ropes and buoys, one of them slipped and fell with the others.

The depth of the water was only at chest level, but the undercurrents were strong due to the rains earlier in the day.

The body of the drowned 17-year-old was found on Thursday evening.

In George Town, the state government regards the six firemen as heroes.

“We are paying tribute to these brave men and our hearts go out to their families in this trying time,” said state Housing, Town, Country Planning and Local Government Committee chairman Jagdeep Singh Deo.

He said the state also contributed RM1,000 to each of the six families. State Fire and Rescue Department acting assistant director Muhammad Tarmizi Md Jaafar received the contributions on behalf of the families at a simple ceremony in Komtar.

Meanwhile, the department flag, the Jalur Gemilang and state flags at all fire and rescue stations nationwide are being flown at half-mast until tomorrow.

The department said in a statement that the gesture was carried out from yesterday as a mark of respect and appreciation for the six divers.

**Residents: Safety Barriers Necessary To Avoid Future Tragedies**


6 Oct 2018

PUCHONG: It is not the first time that people have drowned in the Taman Putra Perdana mining pool, says a resident.

Housewife Muhlifah Suaidi claimed just before Ramadan this year, there were two cases but added the site was a favourite among anglers, who sometimes stayed there till late at night.

“I hope this latest tragedy will draw the authorities’ attention to the lack of safety barriers,” said Muhlifah, 57.
Checks at the site yesterday showed a group of people, who claimed to be contractors, taking measurements on the bridge.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, they claimed to have been given instructions to take measurements for doors to bar entry onto the bridge.

They were also told to close the gaps by the sides.

Commenting on the incident, Sepang Municipal Council deputy president Muhammad Hafiz Shaari said he has met with the district Drainage and Irrigation Department.

“Signs will be erected to warn the public against entering the site,” he said.

An eye-witness Faris Abdul Razak said the tragic incident could have been avoided if proper procedures had been followed.

**M’sians Critical Of SOP Despite Fire Dept Statement**


6 Oct 2018

PETALING JAYA: Despite the Fire and Rescue Department confirming all standard operating procedure (SOP) was adhered to in the Taman Putra Perdana mining pool rescue operation, it did not stop people from questioning and criticising what had gone wrong.

Many Malaysians asked how the operation, which saw six firemen drown, was conducted, whether it was appropriate for all of them to be tied together to a rope instead of separate ropes.

They also raised concerns on the department’s SOP, training and equipment strengths in handling a rescue operation in such circumstance.

On Rakyat bersama SPRM’s Facebook page, a user Lukeman Raajah, commenting on a video on the operation, posted: “(There were) no full scuba diving equipment, tanks and gear visible, and no buoyancy-compensating devices. “No outdoor flood lights were placed strategically, only torch lights for outdoor lighting.”

Lalang Hijau expressed his anger on Facebook, saying it was ludicrous to tether all personnel on a single rope, adding that they should not “toy around with water”.

Another user, Salehudin Al Ayubi called on the department to review the SOP that allowed for the six personnel to be tied together.

“The department director should answer to all citizens and the affected families. A lesson needs to be given to top officers to review the SOP. Perhaps something has to be improved,” he said.
However, their hard-hitting remarks were not accepted by all despite the arguments, as concerned Malaysians rebuked some of the distasteful remarks by showing compassion on social media.

“There is no use in posting foolish comments. Firemen do not earn much but their sacrifices can never be valued by money,” wrote Tommy Kim.

Axel Izarul concurred, adding that the six firemen would not have donned the uniform if they were afraid to die for their country and nation. “I salute them, the true heroes,” he added.

Another Facebook user, Carl’s A Nova said opinions should be expressed in an objective manner without hurting anyone’s feeling.

“Do not humiliate others. Nobody wants tragedy like this to happen,” he said.

**Ptptn Extends Aid To Children Of Firemen Who Died In Tragedy**


6 Oct 2018

PETALING JAYA: The National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) will be offering financial assistance to the children of six firemen, who drowned during a search and rescue mission in Puchong.

Its chairman Wan Saiful Wan Jan said they would be meeting the affected families to collect the particulars of their children to open National Education Savings Scheme (SSPN) accounts for them.

“This is a small gesture on our part. We could not help them to ease their sadness but we could do something for the future of their children’s education,” he said after launching the SSPN Savings Week 2018 event yesterday.

Wan Saiful said they would determine the amount of assistance upon meeting the families.

 Earlier in his speech, Wan Saiful said the sacrifice made by the six firemen was huge and that their families deserved assistance.
Separately, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik visited 17-year-old Muhammad Ilham Fahmy Mohammad Azzam’s family.

The teenager had fallen into the mining pool in Taman Putra Perdana, which led to the search and rescue mission that ended in the death of the six firemen, who were dragged down by strong currents.

Describing it as “a sad tragedy for the nation”, Dr Maszlee also extended his condolences to the Fire and Rescue Department, as well as to the deceased’s families.

Death Of 6 Firemen: Unfair To Criticise SOP, Says Minister


October 7, 2018 Bernama

KUALA LUMPUR: Zuraida Kamaruddin today said a statement by a safety expert who questioned the standard operating procedures (SOP) of the Fire and Rescue Department following the drowning tragedy in Puchong last Wednesday was unfair.

The housing and local government minister said the expert had to get the actual picture and wait for a full report of the investigation before drawing conclusions.

Six firemen died during a search and rescue mission at a mining pool. (Bernama pic)

“I know about the statement, but I think he needs to go to the scene of the incident to get the actual picture and read the full report, then make a statement,” she said at the Lembah Pantai Division polling centre for the PKR polls today.
Peninsula Malaysia Oil and Gas Professional Association (PMOGPA) chairman Marikh Azahari Ramli reportedly questioned the procedures and strategies used in the rescue operation.

He had apparently said that it was not suitable for a situation where there was fast-flowing water, especially at night.

Zuraida said her ministry did not rule out the possibility of reviewing the existing SOP, especially during rescue missions in such conditions.

Last Wednesday, six firefighters from the Water Rescue Team (PPDA) drowned during a search and rescue operation for a teenager at a mining pool in Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong.

**Victims Caught In Souse-Hole**


Monday, 8 Oct 2018 by grace chen

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The drownings at a mining pool, which claimed the lives of a teenager and six firefighters, were caused by a vortex produced by the cascading waters from the weir, said a former swiftwater rescue instructor.

Carl Traeholt, who conducted courses for the bomba training centre in Kuala Kubu Baru, Hulu Selangor, in the late 1990s, said cascading waters from the weir’s ledge causes surface water to flow back upwards, forming a spinning vortex which can pull objects into its centre.

“This is called a ‘souse-hole’, which keeps pulling a trapped victim back into the froth until they drown,” he said.

Though the downstream areas of the weir at the Taman Putra Perdana lake may be shallow, the concrete ledge of the weir is built straight across a waterway outlet, creating a parallel cascade of water spanning both sides of the banks with no escape routes at the sides.

“The biggest dangers associated with these types of weirs are that they look ‘innocent’, yet are death traps to novices,” said Traeholt, who is now Copenhagen Zoo’s South-East Asia conservation programme director.

“An expert rescuer can get out of it, provided he is fit and not panicked. The move requires one to remove any floating devices, move towards the bottom and follow the current out.”

Traeholt, a white-water kayak instructor accredited by the American Canoe Association since 1996, conducted dozens of swift water rescue courses when he was running a whitewater outfit in Kuala Kubu Baru.
He said in emergency situations, a weir must be approached from downstream in a raft or boat by teams standing by on each bank.

Rescue efforts should also be carried out by only one person and he must be anchored to the rest of the team stationed at the banks. This is so when the rescuer gets into trouble, he can be pulled to safety.

“A big no-no is to tie rescuers together as it puts everyone at risk and the chances of getting entangled with the rope are higher,” he said.

Another tip, Traeholt added, is to float when in swift current.

“Also, avoid walking in these situations as there is a high risk of feet getting stuck in debris,” he said.

Fire Dept Set To Be Sued Over Deaths Of Six Firefighters
October 8, 2018  By SAADIAH ISMAIL

KUALA LUMPUR: A non-governmental organisation, Jawatankuasa Bertindak Suara Rakyat, is set to initiate a legal suit against the Fire and Rescue Department over an incident which saw six firemen drown during a rescue mission at a Taman Putra Perdana mining pool.

The NGO’s chairman, Tony Tan, said they aim to seek compensation to help the next-of-kin of the six firefighters.
Tan said they have appointed a law firm, represented by lawyer Datuk Kamarudin Ahmad, to help the families obtain appropriate damages to help them continue with their lives.

A non-Governmental organisation, Jawatankuasa Bertindak Suara Rakyat, is set to initiate a legal suit against the Fire and Rescue Department over an incident which saw six firemen drown during a rescue mission at a Taman Putra Perdana mining pool. STR/FAIZ ANUAR

He said the families could be adversely affected by the deaths of the firemen in many ways, among which include loss of income as well as having to move out of their current government quarters.

“This is our initiative to ensure that the families receive adequate compensation, as many of the families have children. “We will meet with these families soon and if they agree, we will press on with the lawsuit,” he said.

Last Wednesday, six firemen drowned during a search and rescue operation at the Taman Putra Perdana mining pool in Puchong.

The deceased were Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34; Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32; Mazlan Omarbaki, 25 Yahya Ali, 24; Adnan Othman, 33; and Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25.

They were attempting to search for a missing 17-year-old boy when the tragedy occurred.
The tragedy has since sparked heated debates and triggered questions over the department’s rescue procedures.

Meanwhile, Datuk Kamarudin Ahmad, said they plan to sue the Fire and Rescue Department as well as the Home Ministry for negligence.

This, he said, was also aimed at sending a message to the authorities in order to prevent any repeats of the tragedy and curb more loss of lives.

“Each family should by rights receive around RM500,000 in compensation to ensure that their quality of life isn’t jeopardised as they have lost not only their husbands and fathers but also a source of income.

“For now, negligence as well as possibly poor tactics are the major factors behind the lawsuit. They could have delayed the search momentarily due to poor visibility, lack of proper gear, and fast-moving water.

“As such, based on humanitarian grounds, we are offering our legal services pro bono so that the families receive what is rightfully theirs,” he said.

Puchong Drowning: Firemen's Families Agree With Establishment Of Public Inquiry On Incident, SOP Review
October 9, 2018 By Nor Fazlina Abdul Rahim, ABDUL RAHEMANG

KOTA BHARU: The families of six firefighters drowned in the Puchong tragedy on Wednesday supported efforts to establish a public inquiry to prevent recurrence. Wan Ibrahim Mat Daud, 60, the father of Izatul Akma Wan Ibrahim, 32, said while any follow-up efforts would not bring back his beloved son, they would serve as a lesson to all.

“I would agree to any good moves that receive public support. I would definitely agree of the establishment of the inquiry that could identify any weakness and tighten the (search-and-rescue) standard operating procedure (SOP).

“This is not to point fingers to any quarters, but rather for the greater good so that we will not see the same thing occurring in future.

“In fact, I’m of the view that the Wednesday operation, which was carried out night, was inappropriate as the location was too dangerous. The operation should have been halted at 7pm,” he said when contacted today.

He said the family members were recovering despite the shocking news of their loss.

In Tawau, the mother of Mazlan Omarbaki, 25, hoped that the Fire and Rescue Department improve and fine tune its standard operating procedures.
Asmah Abdalis, 54, said the move would help prevent similar incidences in the future and protect the safety of all the rescue personnel who faced multiple risks daily.

“I am sad, but if possible, the government and the department must re-evaluate their operation procedures as their jobs are indeed dangerous.

“I do not blame anyone and I am proud that my late son died while fulfilling his duty to save other people’s lives,” she said, adding that the family members were still grieving with Mazlan’s passing.

Last Wednesday, Izatul and Mazlan, along with their colleagues, namely, Mohd Fatah Hashim, 34, Yahya Ali, 24, Muhammad Hifdzul Malik Shaari, 25, and Adnan Othman, 33, drowned while carrying out an operation at the area.

**Report on drowning of six firemen by year-end**
Sunday, 21 Oct 2018

**KAJANG (Bernama):** The full report on the investigation into the drowning of six Fire and Rescue Department (JBPM) Underwater Rescue Unit (PPDA) divers in a former mining pool is expected to be announced before the end of the year.
JBPM director-general Mohammad Hamdan Wahid said presently, the investigation was still proceeding with an independent committee comprising academicians and underwater rescue experts.

"The committee is independent and is not influenced by JBPM or any its officers.

“JBPM is prepared to accept the findings of the report,” he told reporters after the closing ceremony of the 10th Four Corners Sports Championship (Sukep) at the National Institute of Evaluation (Inspen) here Sunday (Oct 21).

In the Oct 3 incident, six PPDA personnel drowned while in a search and rescue operation to look for Muhammad Ilham Fahmy Mohammad Azzam, 17, who was believed to have fallen into the pool in Taman Putra Perdana, Puchong.

- Bernama