

# HONG KONG: THE FACTS



## Government Flying Service

The Government Flying Service (GFS) is one of the disciplined services departments of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It has an establishment of 223 personnel responsible for flight operations, aircraft maintenance and administration.

The GFS Headquarters (HQ) is located at the south-western corner of the Hong Kong International Airport at north Lantau.

**History of the GFS:** The GFS began operating on April 1, 1993 immediately after the disbandment of its predecessor, the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force.

**Vision:** To be recognised worldwide as a provider of excellent search, rescue and aviation support services.

**Mission:** The GFS is committed to serving the community and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by providing 24-hour aviation support through dedication, teamwork and professional excellence.

The services will be safe, responsive, efficient and cost effective.

GFS will continuously develop the capabilities of its employees and recognise their achievements.

**Value:** The GFS is committed to demonstrating the values embodied in its guiding principles:

**Safety** The GFS is committed to providing safe flying services at the highest professional standard.

**Integrity** The GFS members treat one another with respect, openness and honesty; cooperate and work as a team; and the GFS practices what it preaches.

**Service** The GFS is responsive to its customer's (internal and external) needs and continuously strive for improvements in its services.

**Structure:** The department is headed by the Controller who reports directly to the Secretary for Security.

The Operations Section coordinates with various government departments to provide flying services such as search and rescue, air ambulance, internal security and fire fighting. The Section is supported by a team of professional pilots and air crewman officers.

The flying and operational activities are supported by the Engineering Section, which is an approved HKAR 145 maintenance organisation. The Section provides all the aircraft and equipment maintenance services from within its well equipped and modern hangar and workshops.

All the flying and engineering activities are monitored by both internal and external quality audit organisations. Regular inspections are carried out by internal and external auditors.

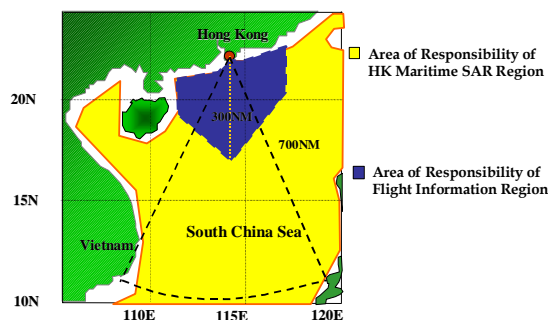
**Roles:** The GFS operates in accordance with civil aviation rules. It maintains a round-the-clock search and rescue and emergency air ambulance service. It also provides services to support the work of various government departments.

**Search and Rescue:** One of the major tasks of the GFS is search and rescue operations. The area of responsibility covers the majority of the South China Sea up to 700 nautical miles south of Hong Kong. Most of the search and rescue operations take place within 400 nautical miles of Hong Kong.

The Jetstream J-41 fixed wing aircraft are used as the initial search aircraft for long range search and rescue operations and to guide helicopters directly to the scene, thus maximising the helicopters' effective range and/or time on scene by eliminating their need to search.

The Super Puma L2 helicopters, equipped with Forward Looking Infra Red (FLIR) detection systems and a powerful search light, are capable of automatic

### Area of Responsibility



approach to a hover for day and night search and rescue operations. The Super Pumas provide the core offshore search and rescue service out to 200 nautical miles south of Hong Kong. The range of the Super Pumas can be further extended if refuelling from an oilrig is available.

**Air Ambulance:** The EC 155 B1 helicopters are used to provide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for Hong Kong people in response to emergency calls from clinics throughout the territory or directly to the scene of accidents.

**Roadside Rescue:** A roadside rescue service was launched on July 1, 2003 to provide a rapid and efficient means of transporting critically injured

casualties from the scene of traffic accidents to hospital. The service is targeted at designated sections of Hong Kong's major highways which may become blocked in the case of major road accidents, thus hampering ambulance access.

**Internal Security:** The GFS provides support to other disciplined services to maintain the internal security of Hong Kong.

The Special Duties Unit and the Police Tactical Unit of the Hong Kong Police Force make use of the GFS helicopters for both training and operations.

Fitted with sophisticated equipment and with long fuel endurance, the J-41's are regularly tasked by the Hong Kong Police Force and the Customs and Excise Department to perform covert patrols for detecting smuggling, illegal immigrants and drug trafficking.

**Fire Fighting:** The Super Puma L2 helicopters have excellent load lifting capability. The aircraft can carry large loads of water during countryside fire suppression operations. These operations are mounted in conjunction with the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Fire Services Department.

In addition to the standard fire bucket system, the Super Puma L2 helicopters can also be fitted with a 'belly tank' with its own suction pump, thereby avoiding carrying the fire bucket as an external load.

**Aerial Survey:** The J-41s are modified to accommodate a modern high quality aerial survey camera for aerial photography purpose. The photographs taken are used for the production of maps, survey of land reclamation and associated tasks.

**General Government Support:** The GFS helicopters also provide support for various government departments in respect of VIP tours of Hong Kong, Justice of Peace movements to remote locations, photography of construction projects and the transportation of personnel and equipment in support of numerous government services located on hilltops and outlying islands.

#### **Important Events in 2008:**

**Sichuan Earthquake Relief:** On 12 May 2008, a devastating earthquake struck Wen Chuan (汶川) county in the Sichuan Province. As part of the joint rescue effort, the GFS deployed a Super Puma helicopter and a team to Sichuan to carry out search and rescue and disaster relief missions. The GFS was involved in 26 operations in which 96 casualties were brought to safety. In addition, a total of 84 ground support personnel and 8.9 tons of emergency supplies were brought to the disaster area.

**'2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events':** In August 2008, the GFS provided 24-hour emergency and operational aerial coverage for the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events and Torch Relay of the XXIX Olympiad Games.

**'SAREX 2008':** From 27 to 30 October 2008, the GFS participated in the 'Hong Kong China International Search and Rescue Exercise 2008' (SAREX 2008) which was held in Hong Kong. It was organised by the Civil Aviation Department with participants including the Hong Kong Garrison, PRC Ministry of Transport, Marine Police, Fire Services Department, Marine Department, the Civil Aid Service, Auxiliary Medical Service and Search and Rescue Teams from the US Navy, US Air Force Air National Guard and US Coast Guard. There were long-range and short-range exercises in the SAREX. The short-range exercise simulated a helicopter crash with survivors and casualties requiring evacuation to the south of Lamma Island. In the long-range exercise, a Super Puma L2 helicopter and a Jetstream J41 aeroplane of the GFS participated in the search for a simulated ship in distress 80 nautical miles away from Hong Kong. The SAREX 2008 was successful in enhancing the coordination mechanism among various rescue units in the region.

The GFS will continue to enhance its services to the community of Hong Kong and to those in peril in the South China Sea and improve its performance in meeting the ever-changing demands on its service.