

An introduction to the Auxiliary Medical Service

The Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), set up under the Auxiliary Medical Service Ordinance, is a medical civil defence corps with an existing strength of over 4,000 volunteer members. Its role is to augment the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority and the Fire Services Department in times of natural disasters, civil disturbances or other emergencies. Since the establishment of the AMS, its members have taken part in many rescue and emergency operations arising from natural and man-made calamities. They have all demonstrated a strong spirit of serving the community.

Admission criteria

Any person who wishes to render community services and is interested in medical work may apply to join the AMS, subject to fulfillment of the following criteria:

- (1) Physical condition : of good physical condition; pass the relevant trade test and medical examination.
- (2) Education: Form 3 level; able to read and write Chinese.
- (3) Age: 16 or above, but written consent from parents or guardians are required of applicants between 16 and 18 years of age
- (4) Holding a Hong Kong Identity Card issued under the Registration of Persons Ordinance (Cap. 177)

Enrolment

Interested applicants should submit the completed application form to the AMS Headquarters at 81 Princess Margaret Road, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon. Upon receipt of the application, the AMS will inform the applicant in writing of the arrangements for the following:

- (1) Trade Test
- (2) Interview
- (3) Medical Examination (to be conducted during the office hours)”

Training

Except for medical professionals, newly recruited members of the AMS must attend a 6-month (about 120 hours) basic training course covering a gist of the AMS

organization, first aid, discipline, control of infectious disease, squad drill and casualty handling. On completion of the training, all trainees must sit for examinations. Those who pass the examination will be awarded certificates and posted to various sub-units of the AMS.

After the basic training, members will continue to receive regular training every month (two Sunday mornings and one weekly evening) to enhance their medical and first aid knowledge and skills, such as casualty evacuation and disaster medicine. In addition, they will receive home nursing training. To meet the requirement for efficiency, their minimum training attendance should reach 60 hours or 60% of the total training hours of their units every year.

The following training programmes are also organized for AMS members to meet operational needs: disaster medical assistants, ambulance aid, driving, use of radiotelephone, leadership, management, life saving and methadone clinic management.

For the convenience of members, most training sessions are held on weekday evenings, weekends or public holidays. Training centers and facilities are provided not only in urban areas but also in the New Territories and the outlying islands, so that they can receive training in the district they live.

Services

In the event of emergencies such as flood, landslide, collapse of buildings, AMS members will proceed to the disaster scene to conduct rescue operations. While as routine duties, they provide a wide range of first-aid and nursing services, including first-aid coverage at country parks and venues of major rallies/public functions; paramedical work at hospitals; manning of first-aid posts for the Fire Services Department; manning of methadone clinics; and provision of non-emergency ambulance transfer service.

Medical Benefits

Under government regulations, a member who sustains any injury or contracts an illness in the course of training or duty shall be entitled to free medical treatment in a government hospital or clinic upon certification by a medical officer. In the case of permanent injury or death, a disability compensation or death gratuity will be payable by the AMS as appropriate and in accordance with relevant legislations.

Allowances

The AMS is an amateur voluntary organization. Those who are interested in voluntary work can join it and spend their spare time in serving the public. It is neither a full-time nor a part-time job to become an AMS member or to provide service as an AMS member. Members are not eligible to paid leaves, year-end gratuity, long service payment, rest days and severance payment. But they are eligible to be paid as follows:

- (1) Under government regulations, an allowance based on the hours of attendance at training or duty is payable to AMS members;
- (2) Members are also eligible for a ration allowance in respect of each attendance at training or duty lasting for 8 continuous hours or more.
- (3) Part of the recruit training is held in the form of self enhancement.

Nevertheless, the greatest reward is not so much the pecuniary remuneration as the acquisition of professional first aid skills, which can be applied in emergencies to serve the public.

Term of Service

A member who, without reasonable excuse, resigns from the AMS or who is discharged or whose enrolment is cancelled within one year of the completion of his/her recruit training shall, upon request by the Commissioner, pay to the AMS the reasonable costs of his/her recruit training received in the AMS.