

Safety checks for 30-year-old public housing



Safety first: The move to form the task force comes after the Feb 11 blaze at Sri Sabah flats, says Muhammad Salleh. — WILLIAM GARY/The Star

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KUALA LUMPUR: In the aftermath of the recent fire at the Sri Sabah flats here, 122 blocks in 24 public housing areas that are more than 30 years old will be subjected to a safety check by the Fire and Rescue Department.

The department's Kuala Lumpur director Muhammad Salleh Abdul said the mission was being carried out by a task force formed to check on fire safety of public housing buildings under Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), in an operation codenamed "Ops Sri PA".

"The task force consists of 70 department members who are

assisted by DBKL personnel.

"We will conduct the inspections from today until the end of the month," he told reporters after launching the task force at the Sri Sabah flats yesterday.

The move to form the task force comes following the blaze at the Sri Sabah flats on Feb 11, he said.

"We want to ensure that public housing meets the minimum requirements for fire safety.

"At the same time, we want to ascertain that the fire safety system at the buildings is working. We will also see whether any improvements can be made based on existing laws.

"The operation will also enable the department and residents to be prepared in facing any emer-

gency," he added.

Muhammad Salleh said any weaknesses or deficiencies discovered in the buildings inspected would be rectified immediately by those responsible.

"The operation is divided into four zones consisting of 122 blocks of public housing buildings.

"Among the areas where the flats will be inspected are Cheras, Setapak and Kerinchi," he said.

Asked if the inspections will be expanded to include other public housing buildings, he said the department would look into the matter.

"Let us conclude the first round of inspections and see the results," he added.

Asked about the forensic report on the Sri Sabah flats fire, Muhammad Salleh said the result would be revealed soon.

"The report has been completed but we are still scrutinising the details. We expect to reveal it within two weeks," he said.

On Feb 11, five units at the 17th floor of the Sri Sabah flats were gutted by fire while one unit was saved at about 9.15pm.

A total of 16 residents were affected as a result of the blaze.