

Fire and Rescue Dept braces for fourth wave of floods

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The Fire and Rescue Department will move some of its assets from the west coast states to Terengganu in preparation for a possible fourth wave of floods to hit the state.

Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah (*photo*) said the move was aimed at improving the logistics and response time for rescue operations and evacuation of flood victims.

He said this was also due to an inadequate number of assets, especially five-tonne lorries in the state at the moment as Terengganu has several flood-risk locations to cover.

"The fourth wave, which is expected to occur on Dec 24 to 25, is likely to be bigger than the third wave due to the combination of high tide and heavy rainfall.

"Our problem (in the state), especially in rural areas is that people prefer to wait until the last minute to evacuate, so we need to prepare several trucks to move the people from several villages simultaneously," he told reporters after attending the Terengganu Malay Entrepreneurs' Appreciation Night 2019 in Kuala Nerus last night.

The government, he said, was also studying the need to purchase important assets such as large trucks and helicopters for various uses, due to the growing population and for the purpose of search and rescue (SAR), evacuation of flood victims, forest fires and so on.

"For example, the Fire and Rescue Department currently has only eight helicopters for its mission throughout Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak.

"Hence, in a special meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail last week we discussed the need to purchase additional assets," he said, adding that it could also be used by other agencies such as the police and maritime authorities for appropriate purposes.

- *Bernama*