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4 families apply for legal aid in compensation bid

RELATIVES of victims of Sunday's double tragedy made formal applications for legal aid yesterday in their bid to claim compensation from those responsible.

The applications were made at Kuntong City District Office, which was turned into an inquiry centre to help families of people who either died or were injured in the two accidents.

District Officer C.M. Leung said 10 families had approached the office for advice, but only four actually filled in application forms with the Legal Aid Department.

Officials of the Legal Aid, Labour and Social Welfare departments were on hand to help the relatives.

Mr Leung revealed that one family is expected to receive financial help under the Traffic Accidents Assistance Scheme in the next two days.

"They were relatives of one of the five people killed in the North Point bus tragedy," Mr Leung said.

"Families of nine people who were seriously injured in the accident also sought advice on social welfare assistance," he said.

Relatives of six workers who died when a construction site lift hurtled down at a site in Ngautaukok made enquiries about legal aid assistance.

They also applied for workmen's compensation through the Labour Department.

The families are still negotiating with Hopewell Construction Company on compensation terms.

They had a discussion with the management yesterday afternoon because they were dissatisfied with the initial proposal of the company - \$30,000 for each family and \$60,000 for the family of Mr Ngan Tin-sing, 30, who was the only worker directly employed by the company.

The families intend to ask for 10 years' wages because all the victims were bread winners.

Meanwhile, the 57-year-old bus driver arrested after the North Point tragedy will report to the Traffic Accident Enquiry Section of Central police station today.

He was arrested in connection with a suspected dangerous driving offence, although he has not been formally charged.

A Government Secretariat spokesman would not comment on whether a commission of inquiry will be set up to investigate the operation of franchised buses following a public outcry over Sunday's tragedy.