

Monitoring for Site Safety

Since we announced the setting up of a Site Monitoring Section (SMS) in the Legal & Management Division of the Buildings Department in October 1995, there has been some comment that the practice note was not clear in parts. This revision aims to clarify the position.

Aims and Functions

2. The SMS aims to enhance the safety of building works on construction and demolition sites by a programme of systematic inspections. Staff will visit sites to focus on unsatisfactory aspects which may have impact on or interface with public safety. Matters of concern in this context include :

- (a) divergence or deviation in a material way from approved plans;
- (b) use of defective materials ;
- (c) absence of adequate precautionary measures;
- (d) lack of supervision by the persons responsible;
- (e) departure from approved or agreed work sequence or procedures;
- (f) inadequacy of experience of workmen or plant operators for specially hazardous operations;
- (g) non-compliance with conditions imposed or orders issued by the Building Authority; and
- (h) contravention of provisions of the Buildings Ordinance or subsidiary legislation.

The object is to enhance safety assurance by encouraging responsible attitudes on site and deterring dangerous operations.

3. Where necessary, the SMS will advise the authorized person or registered structural engineer of corrective action on unsatisfactory aspects likely to have safety-related consequences. Other remedies and sanctions, including the service of orders under Buildings Ordinance section 23 and 24A, prosecution and disciplinary action will be considered where appropriate in the light of the circumstances of individual cases.

Inspections

4. SMS inspecting officers will inspect sites more frequently where the works, the construction stages or the operations pose higher risks to life and limb. Examples are demolition, deep excavations, percussion piling, formation of steep slopes, construction of high retaining walls, works projecting over public thoroughfares and operation of heavy powered mechanical plant.

5. All SMS inspecting officers will carry a warrant card with authorisation by the Building Authority to :

- (a) inspect any premises and enter upon any land;
- (b) ascertain whether the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance are being complied with; and
- (c) carry out tests, make openings and take reasonable samples for the purposes of the Ordinance.

Co-operative Efforts

6. Authorized persons and registered structural engineers are expected to co-operate in the interest of public safety by ensuring that :

- (a) ready access to sites is provided to SMS staff;
- (b) copies of all approved plans, agreed work sequence and procedures and all conditions imposed by the Building Authority are issued to registered contractors to keep on site;
- (c) all approved or agreed work sequence and procedures and all conditions imposed or orders issued by the Building Authority are properly explained to registered contractors, where necessary, with translations provided;
- (d) requirements on supervision of building and demolition works are met;
- (e) adequate precautionary measures are provided, particularly with regard to falling objects at sites;
- (f) any contravention resulting from the carrying out of works is notified to the Building Authority as soon as possible; and
- (g) unsatisfactory aspects of work sites and building works are rectified without delay.

Interface with Others

7. Inspections in connection with approval of plans, issue of consent, permits, licences and occupation permits and performance tests of building materials, structural elements and systems will continue to be carried out by staff of the Development and Structural Engineering Divisions of the Buildings Department.

8. In the event of the SMS inspecting officers identifying contravention of safety requirements not falling within the ambit of the Buildings Ordinance, they will refer the cases to the appropriate government department for consideration of follow up action.

Common Concern

9. Maintenance of site safety demands the joint efforts of all parties concerned. Please bring this practice note to the attention of your clients and the registered contractors they appoint.

10. A similar practice note has been issued to registered contractors.



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