

Monitoring for Site Safety and Quality

Aims and Functions

The Site Monitoring Section (SMS) of the Buildings Department aims to enhance the safety and quality of building works on construction and demolition sites by a programme of systematic inspections. Staff of SMS will visit sites to focus on unsatisfactory aspects which may have impact on or interface with public safety and quality. 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 and quality assurance by encouraging responsible attitudes on site and deterring dangerous operations.

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

Inspections

3. 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.

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4. 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 Buildings Ordinance.

Co-operative Efforts

5. Authorized persons, registered structural engineers and registered geotechnical engineers are expected to co-operate in the interest of public safety and quality 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) copies of all prescribed plans, details of the works and supervision plans (as may be required) for minor works are issued to prescribed registered contractors to keep on site of the minor works;
- (d) 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;
- (e) requirements on supervision of building and demolition works are met;
- (f) adequate precautionary measures are provided, particularly with regard to falling objects at sites;
- (g) any contravention resulting from the carrying out of works is notified to the Building Authority as soon as possible; and
- (h) unsatisfactory aspects of work sites and building works are rectified without delay.

Interface with Others

6. 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 New Buildings Divisions of the Buildings Department.

7. In the event of the SMS inspecting officers identifying contravention of safety or quality 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.

Minor Works carried out in accordance with the Simplified Requirements

8. Minor works carried out in accordance with the simplified requirements (i.e. involving submitted plans instead of approved plans) are small scale with short construction period. Hence instead of a programme of systematic inspections for construction and demolition sites with approved plans, selected cases of minor works under construction will be subject to audit site safety inspections. The matters of concerns, remedies and sanction, cooperative efforts and interface, etc. described above are generally applicable, with the extent depending on the circumstances of individual minor works cases.

Common Concern

9. Maintenance of site safety and quality demand 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 is issued to registered contractors.

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