

Code of Practice on Access for External Maintenance 2021

With the coming into operation of the Building (Construction) Regulation (B(C)R) on 1 February 2021, sections 27(2), 28(5), 31(3) and 34(3) of the B(C)R require the provision of adequate means of access for maintenance and repair of external building elements¹ of a building (M&R access). The Code of Practice on Access for External Maintenance 2021 (the Code) provides guidance on compliance with these requirements. In this connection, the Code supersedes the Code of Practice on Design for Safety - External Maintenance 2019 (Previous Code).

Application

2. By virtue of section 39(2) of the Buildings Ordinance, the requirements for the provision of M&R access do not apply to building works which are being carried out or consent to the commencement of which has been given as at 31 January 2021. In general, building works may refer to foundation works of the proposed development.

3. For proposed alteration and addition works to existing buildings, the authorized persons (APs) should consider exploring the feasibility of providing suitable M&R access in accordance with the Code. Reference should be made to the relevant codes of practice and guidance notes issued by the Labour Department on occupational safety. A list of the relevant publications is in Appendix A of the Code.

Submission of M&R Access Plans

4. APs are required to submit M&R access plans to demonstrate compliance with the requirements under the Code. Procedures for submission of M&R access plans including details, information, supporting documents and developer or owner's letter of undertaking are set out in Appendix F of the Code.

Review of the Code

5. The Code will be reviewed regularly and the Buildings Department has set up a technical committee (TC) to, among others, collect and consider the views and feedback from the practitioners and relevant stakeholders arising from their practical experience in the use of the Previous Code and the Code. Any suggestion for improving it is welcome.

¹ They include external walls, curtain walls, external claddings and roofs, as well as their projections.

6. Taking into account the advice of the TC and as compared with the Previous Code, the Code has:

- (a) updated the interpretation of “External building element” in page 1,
- (b) amended paragraphs 1.3 and 3.9.3 of Part 2, paragraphs 2.5.1, 2.5.2 and 2.6.1 of Part 3, items (d) and (g) of Appendix B, and paragraph 2(a) and Figure 4 of Appendix C of the Previous Code, and
- (c) added paragraph 3.2 in Part 3 and Appendix F for procedures for submission of M&R access plans which is based on the Appendix of the Circular Letter issued on 19 September 2019.

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