

Permanent Water Supply to
Fire Service Installations

An Authorised Person appointed as co-ordinator of a building project is required under regulation 25A of the Building (Administration) Regulations to send two certificates to the Building Authority concerning the supply of water. These certificates relate to flushing and potable water respectively, and should preferably be sent together with the certificate on completion of building works (i.e. Form 19 or Form 20, as appropriate). Each water supply certificate is given to the effect that a permanent connexion has been made to the building in accordance with regulation 10A of the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fittings, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulations, and where the supply is from the waterworks, these certificates are provided by the Water Authority.

2. In some cases a permanent supply of water for a fire service installation in a building is also required under the provisions of the Code of Practice (Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment), but in the Buildings Ordinance, however, there is no specific requirement for a certificate to be provided by the Water Authority as to permanent supply of water to a fire service installation. By implication and interpretation, however, a permanent supply is of course required by virtue of:-

- (a) the Code of Practice (Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment);
- (b) reference to permanent connexion of a supply of water 'for all other purposes for which such supply is to be used' in regulation 10A of the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fittings, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulations; and
- (c) the requirements as to permission for a "fire service" in the Waterworks Regulations (Cap. 102).

The apparent anomaly created in these circumstances has been recognised and various amendments to the Buildings Ordinance and Regulations appear to be necessary in order to make clear and specific provision for a certificate to cover permanent water supply to a fire service installation as a pre-requisite to the issue of an Occupation Permit.

3. Until any such amendments are introduced, there is cause for concern in some cases as to public safety where the necessary connexion to a fire service installation is made after completion of the main building works, and particularly after an application for an Occupation Permit has been submitted to the Building Authority. It is essential that a permanent connexion of water supply to a fire service installation is made prior to occupation of any new building.

4. To make it quite clear that a permanent water supply is required and to preclude the issue of an Occupation Permit until it has been provided, I have decided in consultation with the Director of Fire Services that the following arrangements will be introduced with immediate effect:-


- (a) Where water supply to a fire service installation is either not required at all or has already been permanently connected, the Fire Service certificate required under section 21(6)(d) of the Buildings Ordinance will be issued in the normal way.
- (b) Where a fire service installation is considered to be satisfactory by the Director of Fire Services but a permanent water supply connexion has not been made, the Fire Service certificate will be issued with a rider that it shall only be valid when the permanent water supply has been connected. (Clearly the Director of Fire Services would not be 'satisfied' with an 'efficient' and 'satisfactory' installation if the water supply connexion is not permanent.)

/(c)

- (c) An Occupation Permit may not be issued until the terms of any such rider have been clearly fulfilled.

The alternative to (b) above would have been a return to the previous practice whereby the Fire Service certificate was not issued by the Director of Fire Services until he had received written confirmation from the Water Authority that a permanent water supply had been connected. This practice was changed in June 1979 to reduce the potential for delays in the issue of certificates.

5. I anticipate that there may be only few cases where it will be necessary for the Fire Service certificate to be endorsed with the rider as described in (b) above. In most cases this can be avoided by good co-ordination, particularly when different plumbers and contractors are responsible for the inside service and fire service installations in buildings. To help Authorised Persons improve co-ordination of these works and avoid possible delays to the issue of an Occupation Permit when the permanent water supply connexion(s) lags behind completion of fire service installations, the Director of Fire Services has issued a Circular Letter (No. 7/82) providing advice on this matter. A copy of this is attached for your information.


(W.T. Mok)
Building Authority

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