

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.

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.

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 the Code.

Amendments to the Code

5. The Buildings Department has set up a technical committee (TC) to, among others, collect and consider the views and feedback from the building industry arising from the use of the Code. Taking into account of the advice of the TC, the amendments to the Code in Appendix A have been consolidated in the Code (2024 Edition).

/6. ...

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

6. Except for the requirements in item 1 of Appendix A (i.e. the new paragraph 3.2.4), all the remaining items in Appendix A are implemented with immediate effect. The requirements in the new paragraph 3.2.4 are applicable to all new general building plans (GBP) or major revision of GBP for development proposals submitted to the Building Authority for approval on or after 1 December 2024, and to GBP which have been previously disapproved and are resubmitted for approval on or after 1 December 2024. Notwithstanding the implementation date as mentioned above, AP is advised to provide the anchors for anchorage of personal fall arresting systems in balconies and utility platforms at appropriate locations in their ongoing projects to enhance operational safety for the maintenance and repair works.



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This revision September 2024 (AD/NB1) (Paragraphs 3 to 5 amended, paragraph 6 and Appendix A added)

Amendments to the Code of Practice on Access for External Maintenance 2021

(September 2024)

Legends:

 Amended
 Deleted

(9/2024)

Amendments to the Code of Practice on Access for External Maintenance 2021 (September 2024)

Item	2021 Version	Amendments
1. Part 2 – Paragraph 3.2	3.2.3 The M&R access to the outer surface of balcony and UP shall be provided by power-operated elevating work platform or suspended working platform.	<p>3.2.3 The M&R access to the outer surface of balcony and UP shall be provided by power-operated elevating work platform or suspended working platform.</p> <p>3.2.4 At least one anchor for anchorage⁷ of personal fall arresting system shall be provided at every balcony and UP for carrying out M&R at height. Such anchor shall be readily accessible from the adjoining floor, provided at a height of not less than 1.5 m and not more than 1.8 m above the finished floor level of the adjoining floor and comply with the requirements in paragraph 7 of <i>Appendix D</i>.</p> <p>⁷ Structural detail/fixing detail of the anchor should be submitted for approval in accordance with Appendix F.</p>
2. Part 2 – Paragraph 4.2	<p>4.2.3 Where stepping onto the inaccessible roof for M&R works is required, safety measures such as guard-rails with toe-boards shall be provided at the edge of the roof in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraph 4 of <i>Appendix D</i>.</p> <p>4.2.4 Fixed maintenance ladder</p>	<p>4.2.3 Where stepping onto the inaccessible roof for M&R works is required, safety measures such as guard-rails with toe-boards shall be provided at the edge of the roof in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraph 4 of <i>Appendix D</i>. Where it is impracticable to install permanent guard-rails around the whole perimeter</p>

Item	2021 Version	Amendments
		<p>of an inaccessible roof due to site constraints and/or other design considerations, subject to the conditions mentioned in paragraph 4.2.4, the following alternative shall be provided:</p> <p>(i) proprietary collapsible guard-rail system designed to resist the imposed loads and wind loads not inferior to the requirements as stipulated in B(C)R, Code of Practice for Dead and Imposed Loads (Loading Code) and Code of Practice on Wind Effects in Hong Kong; and/or</p> <p>(ii) temporary edge protection with suitable platform and access ladder designed according to the prior risk assessment⁸ of the concerned M&R task.</p> <p>⁸ Risk assessment for work-above-ground/work-at-height is required under Section 3 of the “Overview of Work-at-Height Safety” as published by the Labour Department and such risk assessment should be conducted in accordance with the “Five Steps to Risk Assessment” by the Labour Department.</p>

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		<p>4.2.4 For provision of proprietary collapsible guard-rail system and/or temporary edge protection with suitable platform and access ladder in accordance with paragraph 4.2.3, suitable anchorage points or horizontal lifeline system for anchorage of personal fall arresting system and/or travel restraint system complying with the relevant requirements under OSHO and FIUO shall be provided at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the roof access; or (ii) other appropriate locations not less than 2m from the roof edge/fragile area; <p>and where the lanyard of the personal fall arresting system and/or travel restraint system could be properly attached before the user moves in a position that he would be at risk of a fall, to facilitate installation/erection of collapsible guard-rail system/temporary edge protection.</p> <p>In case of the access to the inaccessible roof is within 2m from the roof edge/any fragile area or open onto a pitched roof, permanent guard-rails should be provided at least around the roof access point or landing to give the required edge protection for anchorage of personal fall arresting system.</p>

Item	2021 Version	Amendments
		<p>The following general notes shall be added to the general building plans, where appropriate:</p> <p>Suitable anchorage points or horizontal lifeline system for anchorage of personal fall arresting system and/or travel restraint system shall be provided at the locations as indicated in the building plan/maintenance and repair (M&R) plan. Structural details for the anchorage points will be submitted separately for approval.</p> <p>(a) <u>Proprietary collapsible guard-rail system</u> Proprietary collapsible guard-rail system at inaccessible roof shall be designed to resist the imposed loads and wind loads not inferior to the requirements as stipulated in Building (Construction) Regulation, Code of Practice for Dead and Imposed Loads and Code of Practice on Wind Effects in Hong Kong.</p> <p>(b) <u>Temporary edge protection</u> Prior to carrying out of M&R tasks at the inaccessible roof, risk assessment in accordance with the “Five Steps to Risk Assessment” published by the Labour Department shall be conducted and temporary</p>

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		<p>edge protection together with other suitable precautionary measures such as working platform and access ladder shall be provided in compliance with the relevant requirements under the OSHO, the FIUO and their subsidiary regulations.</p> <p>4.2. 5 Fixed maintenance ladder</p>
3. Appendix A	<p><i>Codes of Practice and Guidance Notes issued by Labour Department</i></p> <p>-</p> <p>21 - 36</p>	<p><i>Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes and Other Guidebooks issued by Labour Department</i></p> <p>Add after item 20. Overview of Work-at-Height Safety</p> <p>21. Five Steps to Risk Assessment</p> <p>Change item numbers</p> <p>22 - 37</p>