

**Use of Plastic Sheet
to cover scaffolding outside buildings**

It is obligatory to provide screens, fans, catch platforms or similar protective measures to prevent objects from falling outside the building boundary and to alleviate dust pollution under the law, viz :

- (a) Regulation 49(1) of the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations, Cap 59;
- (b) Regulation 3(2)(a) of the Building (Demolition Works) Regulations, Cap 123; and
- (c) Section 4B(2) of the Summary Offences Ordinance, Cap 228.

2. Contractors often cover entirely the scaffolding erected around the walls of a vacant building under demolition or construction with polyvinyl (PVC) sheets. This practice is sometimes extended to occupied or partly occupied buildings under repair or renovation. The Director of Fire Services has expressed concern that the use of PVC sheets in these circumstances aggravates the spread of fire.

3. The Commissioner for Labour has advised that if not properly fixed, the use of sheeting can affect the stability of bamboo scaffolding during strong winds. Furthermore, there have been instances when PVC sheeting has obstructed the natural ventilation and lighting of occupied buildings under renovation.

4. You are advised therefore to take the following precautionary measures when plastic sheeting is used to cover scaffolding erected around the walls of buildings :

- (a) flame-retardant sheeting should be used;
- (b) scaffolding should be reinforced to withstand strong winds; and
- (c) obstruction to natural ventilation and lighting of occupied buildings under renovation by sheeting should be avoided as far as practicable.

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Index under : Plastic Sheet
Scaffolding