



December 2019  
Issue No.18

To enhance communication with property management agents and other persons in the property industry, the Buildings Department (BD) publishes and sends this quarterly newsletter to all stakeholders and hopefully through them, this newsletter will reach the hands of building owners.

## Little Forum

### Building Owners Fined for Not Complying with Mandatory Window and Building Inspection Statutory Notices

Two building owners were fined about \$7,000 and \$95,000 respectively at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts for failing to comply with the statutory notices issued under the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) and the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance (BO). These were the heaviest fines ever imposed for similar cases.

#### The first case

- A premises in a composite building of 35 years old.
- BD issued a statutory notice requiring the building owner of the premises to appoint a qualified person to carry out an inspection and, if necessary, repair in respect of the windows of the premises.
- The building owner was convicted and fined \$6,800 for failing to comply with the notice.

#### The second case

- Three premises in a composite building of 64 years old.
- BD issued statutory notices requiring the building owner of the premises to appoint a registered inspector to carry out an inspection and, if necessary, repair in respect of the balconies of these premises.
- The building owner was convicted and fined \$95,100 in total for failing to comply with the notices.

For details, please visit <https://bit.ly/31AiyMS>

BD would like to remind property management agents and building owners that failing to comply with a statutory notice without reasonable excuse is a serious offence under BO. BD may instigate prosecution against the building owner. With regard to MWIS, a building owner who fails to comply with a statutory notice is liable on conviction to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000 at present) and to imprisonment for three months, as well as a further fine of \$2,000 for each day that the offence has continued. As regards MBIS, a building owner who fails to comply with a statutory notice is liable on conviction to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000 at present) and to imprisonment for one year, as well as a further fine of \$5,000 for each day that the offence has continued.

## Postcard Design Competition 2019



Champion, Tertiary and Open Section  
"Together We Build"  
SIU Sai Shun



Champion, Secondary Section  
"Shared Responsibility in Building Maintenance"  
李諾潼  
St. Paul's Convent School (Secondary Section)



Champion, Primary Section  
"A Safe and Beautiful City"  
黃健瑜  
CCC Wanchai Church Kei To Primary School



Champion, Parent-Child Section  
"Understanding Building Safety"  
呂鏡明  
Good Hope Primary School Cum Kindergarten (Kindergarten)

The Postcard Design Competition 2019, organised by BD and co-organised by the Hong Kong Education City, with the support of the Hong Kong Society for Education in Art, was wrapped up with a prize presentation ceremony at BD's Building Information Centre on 26 October. The competition attracted an enthusiastic response with over 5 100 entries from more than 380 schools and institutions. The winning entries are now on exhibition in the community. Souvenirs inspired by those entries will be produced as part of the efforts to educate building owners on the importance of carrying out timely building inspections and repair works to help create a safe living environment.



List of Winners  
<https://bit.ly/2klBZSw>

## Cracks

Prevention is better than cure. To carry out timely maintenance, it is important for building owners to have basic knowledge of building defects. Cracks are commonly found in buildings. However, this should not be neglected as they can be structural cracks which will adversely affect the structural stability of a building.

### Structural Cracks

Structural cracks penetrate through finishes down to the concrete at the structural members of a building, such as columns and beams, causing structural implication on the stability of a building. Structural cracks may be caused by many factors. One of the common causes is serious overloading. Different structural cracks may appear at different structural members. In order to avoid structural cracks caused by overloading, building owners or occupants must not:

- illegally alter the structural members of a building;
- illegally erect any structure, especially on the main roof, flat roof or yard of a building;
- illegally change the use of a building / unit;
- illegally subdivide a flat / thicken a floor slab; and
- illegally enclose balconies / verandahs.

Before commencement of building works, advice from building professionals, registered contractors and, when necessary, authorized persons should be sought for ensuring compliance with the Buildings Ordinance.



### Non-structural Minor Cracks

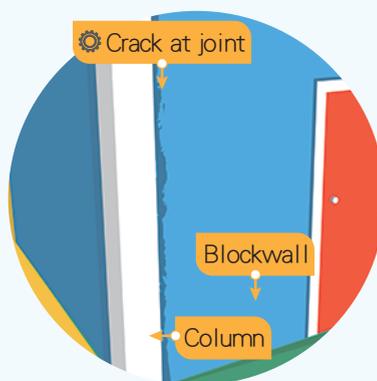
Non-structural minor cracks affect the appearance only and do not pose any safety concern. They are narrow and shallow hairline cracks with not more than 3 mm wide and a few millimetres deep which can be made good with thin cement grout. Common non-structural minor cracks include:

#### Shrinkage Cracks



Shrinkage cracks are commonly found on plaster or other finishes made with cementitious materials. They are shallow, usually short and wide at the surface and multi-directional. The cracks develop within the finishes layer not penetrating down to the reinforced concrete structure. They may be formed within a few hours after the plaster is applied during the hardening process. The plaster surface shrinks and cracks because of the evaporation and rapid loss of moisture.

#### Cracks at Joints



Cracks are commonly found on plaster at joints between columns/beams and block walls, as well as between concrete walls and block walls etc. They are caused by different shrinkage rates as the walls and columns/beams are constructed with different materials and/or at different times.

## Building Safety Advanced Certificate Course

The two-day Building Safety Advanced Certificate Course, tailored for those who have completed the Building Safety Certificate Course (BSCC), was successfully held at BD's Building Information Centre on 30 November and 7 December. Thank you all for your enthusiastic participation and support. Through in-depth exploration of the topics related to building safety, participants have further enhanced their building care awareness. Want to be a building safety expert? Please visit BD's our E-Learning Centre to complete the BSCC and earn a certificate.



BD's E-Learning Centre  
<https://elearning.bd.gov.hk>

