

## New law to improve fire safety for old buildings - Implementation of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, Cap 572

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A new law aimed at improving the fire safety of pre-1987 composite buildings and domestic buildings will come into effect on July 1, 2007.

The Government has published a notice in the Gazette on April 27 to appoint July 1, 2007 as the commencement date for the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance. The Ordinance will be implemented in phases based on the age of buildings.

The first phase of implementation will cover 9,000 pre-1987 composite buildings, with a target for completion in 10 years. In the first six years, the Government will deal with about 5,000 pre-1973 private composite buildings, and in the remaining four years, the Government will deal with some 4,000 private composite buildings built between 1973 and 1987.

When the improvement programme for composite buildings is completed, the second phase will begin. This covers about 3,000 pre-1987 private domestic buildings, with priority given to the pre-1973 buildings. However, domestic buildings with no more than three storeys will be exempted.

The Government is aware of the practical difficulties that some building owners may encounter in complying with some of the fire safety requirements. The Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department will adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach in handling cases without compromising fire safety. For instance, the compliance period may be extended, and relaxation or even exemption of some requirements may be granted as appropriate.

Moreover, owners will be provided with financial and technical assistance. The Building Safety Loan Scheme administered by the Buildings Department, as well as the Hong Kong Housing Society's Home Renovation Loan Scheme and Building Maintenance Incentive Scheme will provide owners with various grants and loans to carry out improvement works.

The Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department will explain

the new requirements to owners and occupiers through inspections, advisory letters, forums and seminars. The Home Affairs Department will continue to help owners form Owners' Corporations to facilitate the implementation of the Ordinance.

For more details of the implementation, please see [the pamphlet of “An Introduction to Fire Safety \(Buildings\) Ordinance, Cap. 572”](#).