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20 August 2013

To: Recipients of FSD Circular Letters

Dear Sirs/Madams,

**FSD Circular Letter No. 2/2013**  
**Fire Hydrant / Hose Reel System**

This Circular Letter announces the revised requirements for fire hydrant / hose reel system stipulated in the *Code of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment, 2012* (FSI Code).

All along, the FSI Code has adopted the same principle with regard to the spacing and location requirements for fire hydrants and hose reels in various premises, i.e. *there shall be sufficient hydrants and hose reels on each floor to ensure that every part of the building can be reached by a length of not more than 30 m of Fire Services hose and hose reel tubing*. Fire hydrants are designed for the dedicated use of firemen and to be sited in the approach lobby to staircase or in the staircase enclosure. Moreover, the provision of fire hydrants in unprotected corridors is not acceptable from the operational point of view. In order to meet such requirements, there were cases where corridors between staircase enclosures and approach lobbies were prolonged, resulting in rather peculiar floor layouts. On the other hand, hose reels are provided for use by building occupants at the beginning of the outbreak of fire and are therefore usually sited in common corridors and/or individual units. Since fire hydrants and hose reels are provided for different users and are subject to different siting requirements, the spacing and location of fire hydrants and hose reels can be considered separately according to their own merits provided that the building fire safety and efficiency of operations are not compromised.

...../To

To rectify the above anomaly, a comprehensive review on the spacing and location requirements for fire hydrants had been conducted by this Department recently. The review concludes that as the maximum travel distance specified in the Code of Practice for Fire Safety in Buildings (Fire Safety Code) promulgated by the Buildings Department has limited the horizontal distance between the furthest point and a required staircase on a floor to be not more than 36 m (not along balcony approach) and 45 m (along balcony approach), fire hydrants to be sited in ALL approach lobbies to required staircases or required staircase enclosures are acceptable to the Fire Services Department. This amendment will enhance building fire safety and at the same time provide clarity in the current requirements to facilitate compliance by building professionals. The proposed amendment had been tabled for discussion and was unanimously supported at a recent meeting of the Fire Services Department / Authorized Persons Liaison Committee.

While the revised requirement is based on the maximum travel distance specified in the Fire Safety Code, building designs adopting fire engineering approach with deviation from the specified maximum travel distance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, for buildings without required staircase, the requirements for fire hydrants will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Besides, the review also revealed that siting of fire hydrants at the central core of staircase enclosure was unacceptable from the operational point of view mainly because the fire hose would run across the means of escape when connected to the fire hydrant. Accordingly, paragraph 5.14(i)(a) of the FSI Code has been revised to prohibit such siting of fire hydrants. The revised requirements are outlined in the enclosed amendment sheet.

The revised requirements will take effect from 1 October 2013 for all initial building plan submissions. Initial building plans voluntarily applying the revised requirements submitted before 1 October 2013 are also acceptable. The revised requirements are recommended for adoption in amendment or A&A submissions. For enquiry and clarification, please contact our New Projects Division at 2733 7854.

Yours faithfully,



(NG Kuen-chi)  
for Director of Fire Services

Encl.



**Code of Practice for Minimum Fire Service  
Installations and Equipment (April 2012 Revision)**

**Amendment Sheet Serial No. 2/2013**

- (1) Replace the EXTENT section of paragraphs 4.1(xi), 4.2(xi), 4.3(vi), 4.4(vii), 4.7(ix), 4.8(xi), 4.13(vii), 4.14(ix), 4.15(x), 4.17(ix), 4.22(ii), 4.23(v), 4.26(v), 4.27(x), 4.28(x), 4.29(ix), 4.30(ix), 4.31(ix), 4.32(x), 4.39(vii) and 4.43(x) with:

*“There shall be sufficient hydrants and hose reels on each floor. Fire hydrants shall be provided in all approach lobbies to required staircases or required staircase enclosures. For buildings not having the required staircase, fire hydrants shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Director of Fire Services. Hose reels shall be provided to ensure that every part of the building can be reached by a length of not more than 30 m of hose reel tubing.”*

- (2) Replace the first sentence of sub-paragraph 4 of paragraph 5.14(a) with:

*“The hydrant shall be prominently sited in an approach lobby to a required staircase or required staircase enclosure but shall not be at the central core of the staircase enclosure.”*