

Brief Notes of Liaison Meeting between Fire Services Department (FSD)
and the Authorized Persons (APs)

Date : 31 May 2024 (Friday)
Time : 1030 hours

*Video conference was conducted

Matters Discussed in the Meeting:

1. **General Building Plan (GBP) Submission and FSI Acceptance Inspection**

Performance Indicators

The figures related to the performance indicators for GBP processed and FSI acceptance inspection for New Projects (NP) Division, Airport Expansion Project (AEP) Division and Railway Development Strategy Division were presented.

Repeated Irregularities Found in GBP Submission/ during Acceptance Inspection

A number of repeated irregularities were noted in recent GBP submissions and acceptance inspections:

- (i) Provision of sprinkler system in specific areas was found not tallied with FS Notes in approved GBP during FSI Acceptance Inspection; and
- (ii) Calculation of building façade of a range of individual connecting houses served by an Emergency Vehicular Access (EVA) was found incorrect.

A list of terminology (English and Chinese) for Systems / Installations / Equipment had been included in a new Appendix III of the “Supplementary Guidance Note on General Building Plan Submissions” in December 2023 whereas the abovementioned irregularities would be included in the next update.

In response to a member’s enquiry on whether FSD could introduce streamline measure regarding minor amendments of fuel tank rooms in

GBP submissions, it was advised that upon confirmation with Dangerous Goods Control Division of FSD, relevant amendments could be made simultaneously by AP in NP Division office.

2. **Car Parking Facilities with Automated Parking System (APS)**

While the response from the Buildings Department (BD) on the information paper was still pending, a number of GBP submissions with APS were approved by FSD in recent years. Generally, dedicated fire safety requirements had been taken into account by AP during plan processing. In this regard, the fire safety requirements for APS, such as access walkway facility and at least two sprinkler heads inside the parking decks, etc. would be applicable in future submissions.

3. **Review of Code of Practice**

FSD Circular Letter No. 4/2024 was issued on 26 April 2024 to promulgate the Chinese version of the Codes, along with the corrigendum to the English version of the Codes.

4. **Fire Protection Measures in Construction Sites**

FSD Circular Letter No. 2/2024 was issued on 21 March 2024 to promulgate the revised requirements on fire protection measures in high-rise buildings under construction.

The revised requirements would take effect from 1 July 2024 for all initial building plan submissions received by this Department. Seminar on the revised requirements was conducted on 8 April 2024 through the platform of “FSD Connects with the Industries”. Relevant video recording of the seminar would be uploaded to FSD website.

Contributions and support from members of the Joint Liaison Group from the Association of Architectural Practices (AAP), Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA), Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) and Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS) were appreciated.

5. **Electronic Submission with Adoption of iAM Smart or Valid Personal Digital Certificate for Application of FSI Acceptance Inspection (Form FSI/314 & FSI/314A)**

FSD had further promoted the e-submission services with User Guides facilitating application of FSI Acceptance Inspection [Form FSI/501 (Rev. 2020)] and Certificate [Form FSI/501a] through email to members of FSD/AP Liaison Group, Liaison Meeting between FSD and FSICA, and Ventilation Installations Liaison Group (VILG) through email on 8 April 2024. AP members were invited to encourage their members and promote to take facilitative measure by using e-submission services.

The electronic submission of the Form FSI/314, FSI/314A, FSI/314B, FSI/314C and FSI/314D had been launched and were available on both GovHK platform and FSD's website for public use.

6. **Implementation of Electronic Submission Hub (ESH) and e-FS161 Certificate**

Stage 3 of ESH was launched by BD on 30 June 2024. In this stage, all types of plans and related documents could be submitted electronically via ESH on a voluntary basis. The GBP, if approved, would be digitally signed by respective Case Officer. In case of amendment of plans, AP would be notified through the chatroom function of ESH, and the amended plan could be re-submitted via ESH.

It was also reported that the existing FS161 Certificate would be digitalized. After June 2024, the use of paper format FS161 Certificate would be ceased and replaced by digitally-signed e-FS161.

7. **Electronic Issuance of Fire Services Certificate (FS172)**

FSD had launched the e-Issuance System for issuance and delivery of e-FS172 with effect from cases for which application for Inspection and Testing of Fire Service Installations and Equipment [Form FSI/501 (Rev. 2020)] had been received on or after 27 May 2024. Representatives and members from the FSD/AP Liaison Group, and the Association of Registered FSI Contractors and VILG had joined an FSD online briefing regarding the arrangement of issuance of electronic FS172 on 24 May 2024.

8. **Streamlining Application Procedures for Exemption of Sprinkler Installation underneath Canopy or in Inaccessible Voids**

It was reported that from time to time, the NP Division would receive applications for exemption of sprinkler installations at certain areas (e.g. canopy, flat roof and raised floor voids) in sprinkler-protected buildings. In accordance with Technical Guidance in FSD Circular Letter 5/2020 (TB206.4.3), “sprinkler protection need not be provided for all external canopies where goods are not stored or handled”.

While processing the applications, it was found that, in some cases, the areas under exemption were too extensive, yet information provided was insufficient or the demarcation was not clearly indicated. As a result, such cases could not be further proceeded or the processing time of the case had to be extended due to supplementary information being required for further consideration.

With the aim to streamlining application procedures, application forms for sprinkler exemption had been designed to facilitate applicants in providing adequate information. Upon implementation, an applicant, i.e. AP, shall submit the application together with a duly completed form(s) as well as relevant drawings. With the application forms in place, it was expected that all the essential information being provided would be sufficient and the overall efficiency could be enhanced. The draft application forms would be circulated to stakeholders (i.e. HKIA, HKIE, HKIS & AAP) for comments after the meeting.

In response to a member’s enquiry if relevant information, restrictions or exemption requirements could be included in the “Supplementary Guidance Note on General Building Plan Submissions” for better compliance, it was advised that various criteria regarding exemption of sprinkler installation underneath canopy or in inaccessible voids were indicated in the draft application forms. Applicants should indicate the fulfillment of relevant criteria in the application forms when making submissions.

9. **Enhancement Measures on FSI Acceptance Inspection for New Building Projects**

FSD would like to enhance efficiency and transparency of FSI inspection processes through strengthening collaborative support and cooperation with

project proponents, especially for cases involving re-inspection arrangement by AP. Currently, the recording of inspection result and re-inspection procedures were stipulated in Part I of the Codes of Practice for inspection, testing and maintenance of installations and equipment.

The following two enhancement measures had been adopted since 20 May 2024 with a view to keeping project proponents and relevant stakeholders informed of the inspection progress and assuring the quality of re-inspection arrangement:

- (i) The inspection report (“Form FSI/507(B)-1”) could show records of dates of inspection coordinated with AP and Registered Fire Service Installation Contractors (RFSICs), inspection results by grouping of irregularities identified with inspected locations, such as Major Defects which might involve missing of main component(s) or severe incompleteness of FSI, defects including minor ones and items requiring clarification by AP, and outstanding documents including amendments and supplementary information, for ease of following up the recorded items by the project AP and RFSICs; and
- (ii) A notification letter enclosed with a copy of the inspection report would be issued to AP, RFSIC and the project owner by the Case Engineer of FSD. Project proponents could therefore note the overall progress, status of their application for FSI acceptance inspection and direct professional services support from the Case Engineer and Inspecting Officer. Those information includes:
 - (a) Key dates such as pre-inspection meeting, application and inspection period; and
 - (b) Reminder to arrange re-inspection together with a report summarizing the photo records of rectified defects through letter or e-mail to Case Engineer to assure all the defects are rectified and in efficient working order. Acknowledgment on request would also be issued to project AP.