

Quality Water Supply Scheme for Buildings – Fresh Water (Management System)

1. Introduction

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) launched “Fresh Water Plumbing Quality Maintenance Recognition Scheme” in July 2002. The said scheme was re-titled “Quality Water Recognition Scheme for Buildings”, “Quality Water Supply Scheme for Buildings – Fresh Water” and “Quality Water Supply Scheme for Buildings – Fresh Water (Plus)” (Q-Plus) in January 2008, March 2015 and December 2015 respectively to signify enhancement features.

Tap water quality can be affected by various factors inherent to a building’s internal plumbing systems, despite the fact that the water supplied by the WSD is safe for consumption, such as a lack of proper cleaning of the drinking water tank, a lack of proper maintenance of the internal plumbing systems causing contamination, or the use of non-compliant materials in the internal plumbing systems. Noting this, the WSD invited expert consultants to assist in developing a set of risk-management based guidelines and templates for the water safety plan for buildings (WSPB) in accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO). The guidelines and templates encompass the identification of potential contamination risks in internal plumbing systems and the formulation of corresponding control measures to safeguard the quality of drinking water. The WHO welcomed the WSD’s action in devising these guidelines and templates, which are considered conducive to promoting the implementation of the WSPB. The guidelines and templates have been uploaded to a website jointly managed by the WHO and the International Water Association for international reference.

To promote WSPB to property owners and property management agents and give recognition to property owners and property management agents who have implemented WSPB, WSD launched a voluntary scheme “Quality Water Supply Scheme for Buildings – Fresh Water (Management System)” (QMS) with support from the Advisory Committee on Water Supplies by integrating WSPB with the “Quality Water Supply Scheme for Buildings on 6 November 2017 to encourage the property owners and property management agents to implement WSPB for safeguarding the quality of drinking water.

Property owners and property management agents who have engaged a Qualified Persons trained in WSPB and passed assessments to develop and implement WSPB according to “Guidelines for Drinking Water Safety Plans for Buildings in Hong Kong” and WSP templates can apply QMS.

2. Objectives

QMS aims to:

- (a) promote to and assist property owners and property management agents to safeguard drinking water quality in their buildings by developing and implementing WSPB through assessments of risks inherent to the internal plumbing systems, execution of the corresponding control measures, regular inspection and maintenance of the internal plumbing systems together with regular audit and review of the WSPB;
- (b) raise the awareness of building owners, property management agents and customers of the importance of proper maintenance and the use of compliant materials for the internal plumbing systems;
- (c) enable the public and overseas visitors to have greater confidence of the water quality at the tap;
- (d) strengthen the capability of property management agents to achieve value added performance in meeting the needs of customers with respect to quality of tap water; and
- (e) give recognition to building owners and property management agents who can demonstrate consistent compliance with the prescribed criteria under the Scheme

3. The Scheme

The Scheme is administered by the WSD. Participation in the Scheme is voluntary and there is no application or renewal fee. The main target groups to join the Scheme are owners, owners' corporations and property management agents. They shall submit new/renewal applications to the WSD using Form A (and Form B (for change of property management agents)) (available on www.wsd.gov.hk).

The WSD will award certificates to successful buildings to recognise the responsible parties' efforts in maintaining the internal plumbing systems properly. The names of the buildings, the owners' corporations (if applicable) and property management agents are shown on the certificates to commend their contributions. The certificates or their copies could be displayed in those awarded buildings, stationeries and promotional materials, subject to the WSD's guidelines. The certificates are classified into three grades according to the length of the continuous period for which a building has joined the Scheme:

Type of certificate	Length of continuous participation*	Validity
Blue – new application	Less than 4 years	2 years
Blue – renewal	Less than 4 years	
Silver – renewal	4 years or more but less than 6 years	
Gold – renewal	6 years or more	

* Q-Plus participants who have submitted application for QMS within 3 months after the expiry of their Q-Plus certificate the grade of their Q-Plus certificates will be automatically carried forward to the Scheme.

For continuous participation, renewal applications have to be made within 3 months before or after the expiry date of the current certificates. Renewals made more than 3 months after the expiry date will be considered as new applications.

4. Assessment of Applications

Applications shall be submitted together with the prescribed documents as follows:

New application	Renewal
<p>All general buildings (such as residential or office buildings) and schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A WSP for the building (applicant should develop the WSPB based on the guidelines and templates available from the WSD’s website on QMS), which should contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General description of the building • Water supply flow diagrams • Risk assessment summary table • Practised routine water safety checklist for general buildings or schools (see Part D and Part E of the templates available from the WSD’s website on QMS), which should include at least one inspection for items with checking frequency of one month 	<p>All general buildings (such as residential or office buildings) and schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ An internal audit report for which the audit is to be carried out by independent parties not involved in the implementation of WSP for the audited building, who should preferably be trained for conducting internal audits. The audit should focus on the aspects regarding the implementation of WSPB (see the audit checklist template available in the WSD’s website on QMS); and ◆ A declaration (with applicant’s company chop) confirming all checking/inspections have been duly undertaken at interval as specified in the WSPB and the annual checking/inspection record by the Qualified Person. Water Supplies Department will later inform the applicant to provide at least 3 sets of monthly routine checking/inspection record for sampled checking (see Part D and Part E of the templates available in the WSD’s website on QMS); and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ An up-to-date WSPB if the document has been revised. <p>All schools that use copper pipes connected with soldering and serve students aged at or below 6, e.g. primary or some special schools but excluding kindergartens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ In addition to the above, water quality examination should be carried out at least once a year and the corresponding test report to be submitted with the renewal application. It is suggested annual water quality testing for lead be carried out for at least one tap for drinking and/or food preparation purposes for two consecutive years. The testing frequency may be reduced to once every 5 years if the testing results are satisfactory. The water samples should be taken using the 30-minute stagnation (30MS) protocol. For details of the sampling protocol, please refer to the testing laboratory or the WSD's website on QMS.
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The entry/renewal criteria stipulated above should be able to cover most of the scenarios. Should it be a special case, WSD will assess individual application on a case-by-case basis and the decision of the WSD on the application shall be final.

To enhance QMS, all new and renewal applications of QMS submitted from 1 July 2020 shall require a QP on the List of Qualified Persons Trained in Water Safety Plan for Buildings and passed assessments (see the List of Qualified Persons Trained in Water Safety Plan for Buildings uploaded in the WSD website on Water Safety in Buildings) to certify Part C – Risk Assessment Summary Table for Building and Part E Table 2 – Routine Checking/Inspection by the QP of the WSPBs.

5. Privacy Protection

The WSD will keep all details of the applications confidential and will only publish the names of successful buildings. The WSD will not disclose details of individual application and the test data of water samples (if applicable) to any third party. In this regard, the applicant should handle all direct/referred enquiries/requests for such data/ information, and is held fully accountable and responsible for such disclosure.

6. Education to Residents

Underpinning the Scheme is the pivotal role of applicants (e.g. property management agents or owners' corporations) in effectively informing and educating building owners the importance of proper maintenance and use of compliant materials for the internal plumbing systems. These may take the forms of display of publications (e.g. topical posters and leaflets), talks and making "maintenance of the internal plumbing systems" a standing agenda item in regular meetings of the owners' corporations. To this end, applicants are advised and encouraged to educate and properly inform building owners of the above importance through the above-proposed forms.

7. Enquiry

Enquiry about the details of the Scheme and application can be made through the WSD telephone enquiry hotline or by fax or by e-mail. The WSD also set up a dedicated help desk (Hotline: 2829 5696, Fax: 2877 4935, Email: wspb_help_desk@wsd.gov.hk) to provide technical guidance on WSPB to building owners and property management agents.

Enquiry hotline: 2824 5000
Fax: 2824 0578
E-mail: wsdinfo@wsd.gov.hk
Website: www.wsd.gov.hk