



水務署  
Water Supplies Department

總部 Headquarters

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Distribution: To all Licensed Plumbers

Dear Sir/Madam,

### Points to Note when Carrying out Plumbing Works

Hong Kong citizens attach great importance to water safety and have high expectations of the professionalism of Licensed Plumbers (LPs). In response to the aspirations of and with the support of the plumbing trade, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has been implementing various measures in order to enhance the professionalism and recognition of the LPs, as well as enable the plumbing industry to keep pace with the times and excel further.

In the past plumbing works, individual LPs occasionally failed to meet the requirements leading to contravention of the Waterworks Ordinance (WVO). Many of these cases are attributed to the LPs not having a thorough understanding of the WVO or the Waterworks Regulations (WWR).

With a view to enhancing the LPs' understanding on the contraventions which might lead to disciplinary actions, we have summarised from previous cases some common examples of contraventions by the LPs in carrying out plumbing works, for reference by the plumbing industry to raise their vigilance and prevent the contravention of the related laws. For details, please refer to the enclosure.

Should you have any enquiry, please contact our Engineer/Technical Support (2) at 2829 4484.

Yours faithfully,

(Original Signed)

(CHAN Chung-kun)  
Licensing Authority

w/ encl.



c.c.

The Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering – Hong Kong Council

Hong Kong Plumbing and Sanitary Ware Trade Association Ltd.

Hong Kong Licensed Plumbing Professionals Association Ltd.

Hong Kong Plumbing General Union

Hong Kong Water Works Professionals Association Ltd.

The Hong Kong Institution of Plumbing and Drainage Ltd.

Plumbing Technology Student Association

The Association of Registered Fire Service Installation Contractors of Hong Kong Limited

Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education

Hong Kong General Building Contractors Association Ltd.

The Hong Kong Federation of Electrical & Mechanical Contractors Ltd.

Contractor's Authorised Signatory Association Ltd.

Registered Minor Works Contractor Signatory Association Ltd.

Hong Kong Registered Contractors Association Company Ltd.

Building Services Operation and Maintenance Executives Society

The Hong Kong Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Association Ltd.

Hong Kong Licensed Plumbers Union Ltd.

Li Ka Shing Institute of Professional and Continuing Education, The Open University of Hong Kong

The Association of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (Hong Kong) Ltd.

**Case of contravention 1: Using leaded solder in plumbing works**

Example

The person employed by a Licensed Plumber (LP) uses leaded solder in plumbing works.

Point to note

As the law enforcement department of plumbing works, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) attaches great importance to the safety of drinking water. Using leaded solder in plumbing works will seriously affect the safety of drinking water and contravene the Waterworks Ordinance (WVO). An LP who fails to ensure that the solder used in his plumbing works meets the requirements of the legislation shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action. LPs are required to have sufficient and rigorous supervision of his plumbing works to ensure that all works comply with the requirements of the WVO and the Waterworks Regulations (WWR).

**Case of contravention 2: Carrying out plumbing works without Water Authority (WA)'s written approval**

Example

An LP mistakenly believes that replacement of a flushing water pipe using the approved materials is one of the works of a minor nature and the prior written approval from the WA for the replacement is not required. Therefore, the LP does not seek the prior written approval from the WA for the replacement of the flushing water pipe from an underground pump room to a roof tank.

Point to note

Carrying out plumbing works without the prior written approval from the WA may affect the safety of drinking water or the operation of the inside service due to non-compliance of legal requirements. Apart from works of a minor nature, if LPs carry out works involving construction, installation, alteration or removal of water pipes without the prior written approval from the WA, the LPs violate the WVO and shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action.

Please refer to Appendix 2 or the link of WSD website below for details of works of a minor nature:

<https://www.wsd.gov.hk/en/plumbing-engineering/licensed-plumbers/works-of-a-minor-nature/index.html>

**Case of contravention 3: Illegal taking of water**

Example

In order to obtain water supply during the plumbing works at a premises which has not been approved of water supply, an LP installs a tee branch before the meter position of a water pipe near the premises.

Point to note

Illegal taking of water may not only contaminate the drinking water, but may also affect the operation of the inside service. Any person who, without the written permission of the WA, installs a tee branch before the meter position of a water pipe contravenes the WWO. If an LP illegally takes water, the LP shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action. If water supply is required for the location of plumbing works, the LP shall submit an application for temporary water supply to the WA. Details of the application can be found in the Guide to Application for Water Supply and WSD Circular Letter No. 5/2018.

**Case of contravention 4: Wrong connection of water supply systems leading to contamination**

Example

An LP mistakenly connects the systems of fresh and flushing water supply without confirming the locations of water pipes for different purposes.

Point to note

The design, use and material requirements of the fresh water supply system, flushing water supply system and fire service water supply system are different. Wrong connection of water supply systems does not only contaminate water, but may also affect the normal operation of the inside service. If an LP mistakenly connects water supply systems, the LP shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action. Therefore, LPs shall confirm the detailed alignments and locations of water pipes for different water supply systems before making connection so as to avoid wrong connection.

**Case of contravention 5: Relocating a meter without WA's written approval**

Example

When an LP replaces a defective water pipe for his customer, the LP also alters the meter position.

Point to note

Unauthorized alteration of the meter position without the prior approval of the WA is an act of interference with the waterworks, which may influence the meter reading and in turn affect the water charges payable by the registered consumer. It is a violation of the WWO. If an LP relocates a meter or changes a meter position without the WA's written approval, the LP shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action.

**Case of contravention 6: Interfering with supply control valve of government main**

Example

When an LP repairs inside service for his customer, he closes a supply control valve of the government main to suspend water supply for the repair works.

Point to note

The government water supply control valve is one of the waterworks. Any person who interferes with or operates the government water supply control valve without the prior written permission of the WA may affect the water supply to the other registered consumers and contravenes the WWO. If an LP opens or closes a supply control valve of the government main without the prior written permission of the WA, the LP shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action.

**Case of contravention 7: Carrying out plumbing works of inside service not according to the requirement of the WWO and WWR**

Example

The position of the water inlet pipe installed by an LP in the water tank of the premises is lower than that of the overflow pipe.

Point to note

According to s.7B of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the WWR, “the invert of the inlet pipe or the outlet of the ball float valve must not be less than 25 mm above the top of the overflow pipe”. If an LP fails to construct a water tank in accordance with the WWR, the LP contravenes the WWO and shall bear the legal liability and be subject to disciplinary action. All the legal requirements set out in the WWO and WWR are included in WSD’s “Technical Requirements for Water Supply Works”. Please refer to the link of WSD website below for details:

<https://www.wsd.gov.hk/en/plumbing-engineering/requirements-for-plumbing-installation/technical-requirements-for-plumbing-works-in-bldgs/index.html>

LPs are required to ensure that the water supply system is constructed or altered in strict accordance with the requirements in the “Technical Requirements for Water Supply Works”.

### **Works of a Minor Nature**

Pursuant to Section 14 of the Waterworks Ordinance (WWO), a person must not construct, install, alter, or remove a fire service or inside service unless the Water Authority (WA) has granted a written permission for it. The WA may grant the written permission on his own initiative or on application of a licensed plumber. Besides, Section 15 of the WWO also stipulates that, a person who is not a designated person<sup>#</sup> must not carry out the construction, installation, maintenance, alteration, repair or removal of a fire service or inside service (i.e. specified plumbing works).

The WA may waive the requirement of permission under Section 14 of the WWO in the case of alterations to a fire service or inside service which are, in his opinion, of a minor nature. Moreover, under Section 15 of the WWO, a person who is not a designated person may carry out specified plumbing works if the works are alterations or repairs to a fire service or inside service that are, in the opinion of the WA, of a minor nature.

Alterations or repairs to a fire service or inside service must not be considered as of a minor nature if the alterations or repairs would, in the opinion of the WA, adversely affect the efficiency of the fire service or inside service in providing a reliable and adequate supply of water; or quality of the water. In the opinion of the WA, examples of alterations or repairs to inside services or fire services satisfying the following 5 conditions are considered as works of a minor nature:

1. do not change the purpose of supply (e.g. from domestic purpose to trade purpose<sup>1</sup>) or the usage (e.g. from fire fighting to vehicle washing or internal cleansing in building, from irrigation to air-conditioning) of the plumbing installation already approved by the WA;
2. do not change the supply of the plumbing installation already approved by the WA from indirect to direct;
3. do not require dismantling and reinstallation of the water meter installed by the WA or any authorized person;
4. do not involve soldering for connecting copper pipes; and
5. do not require provision of backflow preventive devices for water using apparatus or water filter.

<b>A. At the inside service solely serving an individual flat/unit within a building</b>		<b>Examples</b>
i.	Replacement of pipes or fittings <sup>2</sup>	<p>Within a domestic flat, a shop unit or an office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Replacement of pipes or fittings</li> <li>● Replacement of a water closet and its flushing cistern</li> <li>● Replacement of a water heater, provided that the type of water heater does not change</li> </ul>
ii.	Repairs to leaking pipes or fittings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rewashing of an existing tap</li> <li>● Tightening joints of a leaking pipe</li> <li>● Fixing components of a leaking fitting</li> </ul>
iii.	Insertions or taking-out of valves along the existing pipeline within the same flat/unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Insertion of a gate valve along the existing pipeline between a kitchen and a bathroom within a domestic flat</li> </ul>
iv.	Extensions or reductions of the existing pipeline with addition of a new tap/new valves or abandonment of some existing taps/valves within the same flat/unit for supplying a single additional draw-off point, appliance or device, provided that the draw-off point, appliance or device does not require the installation of a storage tank	<p>Within a domestic flat, a shop unit or an office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extension of the existing pipeline to supply a single additional draw-off point</li> <li>● Shortening and plugging of the pipeline supplying an existing tap</li> <li>● Extension of the existing pipeline for supplying a single additional water using apparatus such as washing machine, dish-washing machine or water filter</li> </ul>

<b>B. At the inside service or fire service within a building/lot boundary (other than A)</b>		<b>Examples</b>
i.	Replacement of pipes or fittings of length not exceeding 3 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Replacement of about 2-metre long corroded/leaking pipe, valve, cock, tank or defective pumpset in communal pipe of inside service or fire service within a building</li> </ul>
ii.	Repairs to leaking pipes or fittings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rewashing of an existing tap</li> <li>● Tightening joints of a leaking pipe</li> </ul>



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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fixing components of a leaking fitting</li> </ul> |
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*Notes:*

1. *“Domestic purpose” means a purpose connected solely with the occupation of a dwelling-house and does not include a purpose connected with a garden, lawn, playground or swimming pool appurtenant to a dwelling-house. “Trade purpose” means water supplied for use for any purpose connected with a trade, manufacture or business, other than a construction purpose, shipping purpose or domestic purpose.*
2. *“Fitting” means any apparatus, cistern, cock, equipment, machinery, material, tank, tap, valve and any appliance or device other than a meter installed by the Water Authority, which is installed or used in a fire service or inside service.*

Minor alterations and repairs to inside services or fire services shall conform to the waterworks requirement in respect of quality of workmanship and material. It is in the interest of the consumer/agent that in case of doubt to notify the WA of his/her intention, so that the WA can give advice to the consumer/agent.

Please employ a licensed plumber to submit an application to the WA prior to carrying out the **works not of a minor nature** and the works concerned shall be carried out by a designated person. A person who employs or permits a person who is not a designated person to carry out **works not of a minor nature** commits an offence.

#“Designated person” means:

1. a licensed plumber;
2. a registered plumbing worker;
3. a registered plumbing worker (provisional);
4. a person who carries out specified plumbing works under the instruction and supervision of a licensed plumber or registered plumbing worker; or
5. a public officer authorized by the WA.