

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Proposed Amendments to Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102)

Strengthening Regulation on Internal Plumbing System¹ to Enhance Drinking Water Safety and Water Use Efficiency



The consultation paper can be downloaded from the Water Supplies Department public consultation website <https://www.wsd.gov.hk/en/pconsultation/LegislativeReview.html> or is available at

Water Supplies Department
Customer Enquiry Centres

Home Affairs Enquiry Centres



In order to enhance drinking water safety and water use efficiency, having consulted the industry stakeholders, the Development Bureau and the Water Supplies Department (“WSD”) propose to amend the Waterworks Ordinance (“WWO”) (Cap. 102) and its subsidiary legislation to strengthen the regulation on the internal plumbing system and cover other topics below. Members of the public are welcome to give their views on the proposed amendments.

Regulation of Plumbing Works

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of trade practitioners in the carrying out of plumbing works, including the project proponent (e.g. developer/property owner), designer, plumbing contractor, licensed plumber, plumbing worker, etc.
- Introduce the “Registered Plumbing Contractor” system. The registered plumbing contractor shall be responsible for carrying out the plumbing works and ensure their compliance with the requirements in the WWO.
- Impose supervision requirements based on the scale of plumbing works to strengthen the quality control of plumbing works.
- Introduce mandatory continuous professional development as one of the renewal requirements for plumbers’ licences.

Control of Plumbing Materials

- Introduce the relevant testing requirements in the Australian/New Zealand standard AS/NZS 4020 to control the leaching of metals from plumbing materials in internal plumbing systems.

Control of Drinking Water Dispensers and Fountains

- Prescribe the standards and specifications for drinking water dispensers and fountains directly connected to an internal plumbing system.

Safeguarding Drinking Water Safety

- Empower the Water Authority (“WA”) to enter premises to take water samples for ascertaining drinking water quality.
- Empower the WA to issue a notice requiring the party who is responsible for the maintenance of the internal plumbing system to investigate and rectify the drinking water quality problem in the internal plumbing system.
- Introduce penalty to deter any person from contaminating drinking water in an internal plumbing system.

Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme (WELS)

- Require the registration of showers for bathing, water taps, washing machines, urinal equipment, flow controllers, water closets and other water using devices as required by the WA (“products of the prescribed WELS Types”) under WELS for sale in the local market.
- Prescribe the legal requirements on suppliers of products of the prescribed WELS Types to ensure the product it sells has been registered under WELS and affixed with a WELS label before putting it for sale in the retail outlets.

Proper Maintenance of Communal Part of Internal Plumbing System and Rectification of its Water Loss

- Clearly define the role of property owners in the maintenance responsibilities of the communal part of an internal plumbing system (“communal service”).
- Introduce a communal water loss charge to the party responsible for the maintenance of the communal service upon expiry of a grace period if the water loss in the communal service of a development exceeds a level prescribed by the WA.
- Empower the WA to issue a notice requiring the party who is responsible for the maintenance of the communal service to carry out investigation and rectification of water loss in the communal service.
- Introduce penalty for not complying with a repair notice.

Others

- Registered consumers shall only be allowed to recover from the occupiers of their premises the water charge paid to the WA for water consumption.
- Increase the penalty for the offence of unlawful taking of water.
- Charge the fresh water flushing consumption at a higher rate if failing to convert to salt water for flushing within a reasonable time.

On-line Public Forums

We will convene two on-line public forums. Members of the public may refer to the website of the WSD for the latest news about the forums.

The details of the forums are as follows:

The First Forum (Cantonese)

12 December 2020 (Saturday)
2:30pm - 4:30pm
(Available for log-in from 2:00pm)

The Second Forum (English)

12 December 2020 (Saturday)
7:00pm - 9:00pm
(Available for log-in from 6:30pm)

- Arrangements under special circumstances: The forums may be postponed if special circumstances (e.g. Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal issued by the Hong Kong Observatory, “extreme conditions after super typhoons” announced by the Government, etc.) occur on the day of the forum. Details will be announced before 10:00am on the date of the forum.
- Members of the public who would like to attend the forum may make reservation on or before 4 December 2020 through the public consultation website.

Response to Consultation Paper

Members of the public are welcome to send their written views on the proposed amendments to the WWO to the WSD by post, e-mail or fax on or before 3 February 2021.

Posting address : Legislative Review Unit
Water Supplies Department
46/F, Immigration Tower,
7 Gloucester Road,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

E-mail address : LR_consultation@wsd.gov.hk

Facsimile : 2520 3256

¹ “Internal plumbing system” means “inside service” and “fire service”, which are defined in section 2 of the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102).

