

**Subcommittee on Waterworks (Amendment)(No.2) Regulation 2017
(“The Amendment No.2 Regulation”)**

**Response to the List of follow-up actions
arising from the discussion at the meeting on 17 November 2017**

Response to item (a)

1. The Administration has noted the views expressed by the deputations in the following aspects and would like to provide a collective response as below.

Meaning of the expressions under the proposed Regulation 25(2A)(a) & (b)

2. In the proposed Regulation 25(2A) of the Waterworks Regulations (Cap. 102A) (“WWR”), it makes clear that (a) “*the efficiency of the fire service or inside service in which the pipe or fitting is installed in providing a reliable and adequate supply of water*” and (b) “*the quality of the water*” are the two factors that the Water Authority (“WA”) would consider in exercising his power of relaxation under Regulation 25(2) of the WWR. The former factor refers to water pressure, water flow and risk of water leakage in a plumbing system with a reliable and adequate water supply; whilst the latter factor refers to the effect on water quality after installation of a pipe or fitting. Currently, Water Supplies Department (“WSD”) monitors the quality of treated water in Hong Kong with reference to the World Health Organization’s Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality (“WHO Guidelines”).

Regulation of Fire Services Installations

3. We also noted the suggestion of introducing a separate part in the Schedule 2 of the WWR for fire services installations, which is a non-potable system, to facilitate a more effective control on fire services system. We understand that there is a set of requirements and standards listed in the “Codes of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment and Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Installations and Equipment” issued by Fire Services Department (“FSD”) by virtue of Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B). The Administration will maintain an open mind for this

matter and will consult the relevant stakeholders, including FSD, in 2018.

Training and development of plumbing workforce

4. We have been working closely and will continue to collaborate with the Construction Industry Council to organize training programmes/courses for enhancing the knowledge of workers to cater for the latest development of the plumbing trade, technologies and practices.

WSD Circular Letter nos. 2/2016 and 5/2017 (not 4/2017 as mentioned in meeting)

5. WSD Circular Letter no. 2/2016 promulgates a pilot scheme to enhance the inspection process with a view to shortening the overall time for completion. Since the pilot scheme is supplementary and on voluntary basis, the current practice remains unchanged. Under the pilot scheme, the licensed plumbers are still required to carry out an inspection and complete the respective inspection checklists to the prescribed requirements and the completed inspection checklists including site photos are required to be certified by relevant qualified professional, i.e. a registered professional engineer (building services) or a Member of the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers in building services discipline, with a view to ensuring a proper submission would be made to shorten the scrutinize time by the WA. Audit checks will also be carried out by the WA on a random basis.

6. WSD Circular Letter no. 5/2017 promulgates the enhanced workflow to online re-plumbing works in occupied building. We noted the risk of using soldering materials in addition to those fittings with integral solder ring and had emphasized that in the same WSD Circular Letter that if soldering is to be adopted, the applicants shall conduct non-destructive test of lead content and include photo record(s) of such test(s) in the submission to the WA.

7. We will continue to review and enhance the contents of the WSD Circular Letters in light of the views of stakeholders.

Standards for stainless steel pipes and fittings

8. Paragraph 20 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the WWR had stipulated the material standards for stainless steel pipes and fittings.

Response to item (b)

9. Hong Kong has all along been adopting the Guideline Values /Provisional Guideline Values of the WHO Guidelines as the drinking water standards for compliance monitoring. Relevant acceptance criteria on test parameters of water samples in fresh water inside service have been promulgated via WSD Circular Letters nos. 2/2012 and 1/2015 for licensed plumbers and the trade. These WSD Circular Letters are also published on WSD's website for the reference of the public. This practice has all along been effective and retains flexibility for the WA to give prompt response in catering for changes in the plumbing trading or the WHO Guidelines.

Response to item (c)

10. The need and means to regulate drinking water appliance including hot water dispensers will be explored in a separate study on drinking water regulatory regime undertaken by DEVB which is scheduled for commencement in early 2018. Before finalizing the proposal of drinking water regulatory regime, WSD will continue proactively launching promotion and implementing control measures through administrative means to ensure the drinking water safety of hot water dispensers.

Response to item (d)

11. The licensed plumber who applies for permissions, which is subsequently granted by the WA, under the section 14(1) of the WWO for the construction or installation of a fire service or inside service ("the responsible LP") is required to certify that the completed works covered by that permission comply with the section 14(3) of the WWO. If there is any non-compliance of pipes or fittings irrespective of the method of assembly under such permission, the responsible LP may commit an offence with a maximum fine at level 4 and without any imprisonment term. Under Waterworks (Amendment) Bill 2017, we have proposed to add a statutory defence provision for the responsible LP, who is charged with the offence, to prove that he or she has taken reasonable steps to ensure that section 14(3) is not contravened. That said, the responsible LP has to satisfy himself by suitable means the installation has complied with requirements of the WWO and the WWR.

Development Bureau
8 December 2017