

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1230/20-21(02)

Ref : CB2/SS/9/20

**Subcommittee on Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) (Amendment)  
Regulation 2021**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information and summarizes discussions by the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on the Administration's proposal to amend the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95B) ("FS(IE)R") to promote a wider use of stand-alone fire detectors to be installed in premises of owners/occupants' own volition.

**Background**

2. According to the analysis conducted by the Fire Services Department ("FSD"), of the building fires which claimed 84 lives between 2016 and 2020 in Hong Kong, almost 90% of building fires occurred in domestic premises. The fatality rate could have been reduced if building occupants were able to evacuate before they became unable to save themselves due to the effects of exposure to smoke, heat, or toxic effluent, particularly in circumstances where the occupants fell asleep in their premises when the fires occurred. Early detection of fire and an early warning to building occupants for timely evacuation are therefore of paramount importance to save their lives in case of a fire.

3. A stand-alone fire detector is a self-contained battery-operated device that incorporates a fire detector and an alarm, serving the purpose of detecting a fire and giving audible alarm warning or other form of warning to building occupants during the incipient stage of fire. With prompt notification, occupants can have more time for evacuation. According to the Administration, since the establishment of the first international standard by the National Fire Protection Association for stand-alone fire detectors in 1967, the

device has become more durable, affordable and simple to be installed. The technology is now well developed with high reliability. In view of the effectiveness of stand-alone fire detectors in reducing fire losses, minimal technical skills required for their installation and maintenance, as well as their rising importance in domestic fire protection, the Administration proposes to amend FS(IE)R, in order to promote a wider use of stand-alone fire detectors of the owner/occupants' own volition in buildings and premises, particularly in domestic premises.

### **Deliberations of the Panel**

4. The Panel was briefed on the Administration's proposal to amend FS(IE)R to promote a wider use of stand-alone fire detectors at its meeting on 9 April 2021. The major deliberations are summarized in the following paragraphs.

#### Operation, installation and maintenance of stand-alone fire detectors

5. Members noted the Administration's proposal to amend FS(IE)R to exclude stand-alone fire detectors from the application of regulations 6(1), 7(1) and 8 of FS(IE)R, to the effect that owners and occupants of any buildings and premises would not be required to engage registered fire service installation contractors ("RFSICs") for the installation, maintenance, inspection or repair of any stand-alone fire detectors which were installed of the owners/occupants' own volition. Besides, owners and occupants would be exempted from the statutory duty of keeping the stand-alone fire detectors in efficient working order at all times and having them inspected by RFSICs at least once in every 12 months.

6. While welcoming the legislative proposal, members expressed concern that some members of the public might use the stand-alone fire detectors improperly or did not realize the malfunction of the device. They suggested that guidelines should be provided to the public to ensure proper use and maintenance of the device. According to the Administration, the installation of a stand-alone fire detector was simple and did not require any specific skill. It was normally fitted to a mounting plate and could be easily attached to the surface of a ceiling by adhesive tapes or screws. It usually came with a test button for checking whether it worked normally, and a low battery warning buzz to alert users to the need for battery replacement. Users could simply follow the instructions in the user manual that came with the device upon purchase, or the guidelines to be published by FSD for installation and

maintenance. Moreover, members of the public could make enquiries by calling FSD's hotline when necessary.

7. In response to members' concern about the cost of stand-alone fire detectors, the Administration advised that depending on the functions of the stand-alone fire detectors, the retail price ranged from \$200 to \$800 per device.

8. Given that owners of stand-alone detectors would be exempted from the statutory duty to keep the stand-alone fire detectors in efficient working order or have them inspected by RFSICs at least once in every 12 months, some members were concerned about the quality and the safety issues associated with the device.

9. According to the Administration, a stand-alone fire detector was a self-contained battery-operated device, and could be installed and operated independently. The stand-alone fire detector, being a consumer product upon legislative amendments, would be regulated by the market itself. That said, FSD had discussed with the Consumer Council about the feasibility of conducting tests on different models of stand-alone fire detectors in the coming future, with a view to raising public confidence in purchasing the device. When receiving reports about failure to comply with the standards claimed by the manufacturers, FSD would refer the cases to relevant enforcement authorities for follow-up.

#### Promoting a wider use of stand-alone fire detectors in residential premises

10. To effectively reduce fire losses, some members suggested that subsidy be given to owners/occupants of "three-nil" buildings and subdivided flats to install stand-alone fire detectors.

11. Members were advised that the Administration aimed to amend FS(IE)R to encourage voluntary use of stand-alone fire detectors first. A pilot scheme would be launched in which FSD's volunteers would assist in installing stand-alone fire detectors in some target residential premises. Depending on the response of the pilot scheme, FSD would hold further promotional activities to raise the public awareness on the use of the detectors. As a measure to enhance fire safety, the Administration was planning to distribute fire extinguishers and fire blankets, commonly known as the "two treasures of firefighting tools", to residents in old buildings meeting certain criteria in some districts with more "three-nil" buildings.

**Relevant papers**

12. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
25 June 2021

**Relevant papers on  
promoting a wider use of stand-alone fire detectors**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Security	9.4.2021 (Item III)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
25 June 2021