

NOTE FOR PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Supplementary information on 657CL – Demolition of buildings, structures and chimneys at Kwai Chung Incineration Plant

INTRODUCTION

In considering the paper referenced PWSC(2007-08)29 on the above project at the Public Works Subcommittee meeting held on 6 June 2007, Members requested the Administration to consider and provide supplementary information to the Finance Committee as follows –

- (a) additional insurance coverage, if any, for workers in respect of the health hazards caused by exposure to contaminated materials (such as asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and dioxin-containing materials (DCM)) during the works period of the project;
- (b) protective measures for workers during the removal, treatment and disposal of ACM and DCM;
- (c) measures to safeguard the health of local residents in the nearby estates; and
- (d) measures to control the environmental impact of the disposal of ACM and DCM at the landfill.

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THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE**(a) Additional insurance coverage, if any, for workers in respect of the health hazards caused by exposure to contaminated materials (such as asbestos-containing materials (ACM) and dioxin-containing materials (DCM)) during the works period of the project**

2. We consider that the best safeguard to the health and safety of workers is to protect them from exposure to hazards. This includes the provision of adequate personal protective equipment to the workers and a safe environment for them to carry out the construction works. Details of the protective measures for the demolition works of the project are provided in paragraph 5 below.

3. In the unlikely event that a worker contracts diseases arising from accidental exposure to ACM or DCM during work, the worker may claim compensation from the employer under the relevant provisions of the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282)¹. The Employees' Compensation Ordinance also requires employers to take out insurance policies to cover their liabilities both under the Ordinance and the common law. The minimum insurance cover as specified in the Ordinance shall not be less than \$100 million per event if the number of employees does not exceed 200 and shall not be less than \$200 million per event if the number of employees exceeds 200. In addition, for pneumoconiosis contracted from exposure to ACM, compensation is recoverable under the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 360). This Ordinance provides that any person suffering from pneumoconiosis (i.e. fibrosis of the lungs due to dust of free silica or asbestos, or dust containing free silica or asbestos) may lodge a claim for compensation from a fund being managed by the Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board.

4. Therefore, we consider that the legislation has provided adequate protection for workers against possible hazardous effects arising from dealing with DCM and ACM. We will ensure that the contractor will comply with the relevant obligations under the Ordinance.

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¹ An employer shall be liable to pay compensation in accordance with Cap. 282 if an employee suffers from disease which is personal injury by accident arising out of and in the course of the employment caused to an employee. However, where an employee has suffered from pneumoconiosis, compensation is recoverable under the Pneumoconiosis (Compensation) Ordinance and in which case Cap. 282 does not apply.

(b) Protective measures for workers during the removal, treatment and disposal of ACM and DCM

5. The removal, treatment and disposal of ACM and DCM will be undertaken by a registered asbestos contractor². The contractor is required to provide proper training for workers and appoint a registered asbestos supervisor² to carry out full-time supervision of the work. The contractor is also required to provide a safe working environment to workers. The work will be undertaken within enclosed areas in order to avoid accidental leakage of contaminated materials to the environment. In particular, for DCM removal work within the chimney, negative pressure will be applied to the working area as additional protection. A three-chamber decontamination unit (consisting of a dirty room, a washing room and a clean room) will be established to decontaminate the workers before they leave the enclosure. Workers serving within the enclosure will be equipped with all necessary personal protective equipment including the protective clothing and respiratory protective equipment.

(c) Measures to safeguard the health of local residents in the nearby estates

6. We have appointed experienced consultants to supervise the work. At the commencement of the contract, the contractor is required to erect a 5.5-metre high hoarding to separate the site from the surrounding. Prior to commencing the work, the contractor will submit a detailed proposal including risk assessment, safety measures and contingency plan to cater for emergency situations. These will be scrutinised by the consultants to ensure compliance with the environmental mitigation and precautionary requirements as stipulated in the environmental permit and all relevant environmental ordinances.

7. During the course of the work, a thorough environmental monitoring and auditing (EM&A) programme will be undertaken to ensure that all environmental parameters (such as noise, air, water etc.) are under close and regular surveillance. Apart from deploying a dedicated site supervisory team from the consultants, we will also employ an independent environmental checker to undertake independent audit of the overall EM&A programme. We will make all environmental monitoring data available to the public via internet in the shortest possible time after the data has been consolidated.

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² Registered under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap. 311).

8. As detailed in paragraph 5 above, a registered contractor will be responsible for handling the work for the ACM and DCM. They will be removed and treated in enclosed areas with appropriate protective measures so as to avoid any accidental leakage of contaminated materials to the environment. The final disposal of the materials to the landfill will be carried out via sea route.

(d) Measures to control the environmental impact of the disposal of ACM and DCM at the landfill

9. All ACM removed will be disposed of at designated locations of landfill after being properly encapsulated. As for DCM, they will be stabilised first by mixing with cement. The mix will undergo a toxicity characteristic leachate procedures test to ensure compliance with the landfill disposal criteria. The stabilised material will then be sealed in polythene-lined steel drums and disposed at designated locations of landfill. These procedures will ensure that the environmental condition of the landfill will not be adversely affected by the disposal.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
June 2007