

Buildings (Amendments) Bill 2003
Submission to LegCo Bills Committee by HKCA

Introduction

The HKCA generally supports the proposed minor works contractor registration system and the geotechnical engineers registration system. We welcome the proposals to streamline the minor works procedures and rationalize the building control regime. It is envisaged that the registration systems and control of minor works will enhance both the quality and safety in the industry benefiting the society at large.

HKCA concerns on the proposed amendments

1. We note that the fines for various offences under the amendments are increased 4 to 6 times and the maximum fine is proposed to increase from \$250,000 to \$1,500,000. HKCA strongly objects the increase and considers it over punitive. We all know that the construction industry is currently in its most difficult time with an alarming high unemployment rate of 18.9% as of the first quarter of 2003. Most contractors are striving just for existence. Such harsh penalties are totally out of proportion and will only suffocate the industry. Moreover, a substantial amount of minor works contractors are comparatively smaller size organizations. Such high penalties will have a deterrent effect rather than encouraging them to register, which is against the intention of the Bill.
2. The HKCA requests that the registration and renewal period for registered general building contractors (RGBC) and registered specialist contractors (RSC) to be extended from 3 years to 5 years. We note the amendments proposed the registration/renewal period for APs/RSEs to be extended from 1 year to 5 years and consider the 5 years period should also apply to RGBC/RSC on the same rational of reducing the time-consuming processes of registration and renewal. It will also reduce the frequent needs of convening Contractor Registration Committee meetings that involve also members from the industry.
3. We note that the details of the minor works contractor registration such as requirements on qualifications, resources, experiences etc. and the categories of minor works are yet to be announced. We request the Building Authority to set out the details and allow sufficient consultation period for the industry to feedback and familiarize the system in order to achieve a smooth implementation.

We hope members of the Bills Committee will support the above and be able to address to our concerns. Thank you.

The Hong Kong Construction Association