

For information

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL
ON PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS**

DISPLAY OF STREET NAMES AND BUILDING NUMBERS

PURPOSE

At the Bills Committee meeting for the Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2003 (the Bills Committee) on 11 November 2003, the Administration was requested to review comprehensively the present arrangements on the display of street names and building numbers and report the outcome of the review to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works. With input by the Highways Department (HyD) and Rating and Valuation Department (RVD), this paper describes the outcome of the subject review.

DISPLAY OF STREET NAMES

Background

2. Lands Department is responsible for gazetting the names of public roads. After a road name is gazetted, HyD installs street name plates (SNPs) along the road. SNPs are normally mounted on posts near the edge of footpaths, with some affixed to building façades.

Present Situation

3. As a general principle, SNPs are provided at the beginning and end of a road, and at corners of road junctions. The majority of road junctions throughout the territory have already been installed with SNPs. Intermediate SNPs are also installed at a spacing of approximately 200 metres if the distance between two junctions is more than 400 metres, unless the road is an expressway or a rural road.

4. The existing SNP design shows the English and Chinese street

names. The SNP has only one signface and is mounted facing the carriageway.

Improvement Measures

5. HyD has come up with a new SNP design. Building numbers will be shown together with the street names. Two SNPs will be installed back to back on the posts so that they can be seen from both the carriageway and the footpath sides.

6. Starting from early 2004, HyD will install new SNPs at locations where the SNPs should be in place according to the principle set out in paragraph 3 above but are missing. Replacement of the existing SNPs with new ones will be carried out at the same time.

DISPLAY OF BUILDING NUMBERS

Background

7. The Commissioner of Rating and Valuation, under the Buildings Ordinance, Cap. 123, is the competent authority for the numbering of buildings throughout the territory. The paper on Building Numbers (at **Annex**) submitted to the Bills Committee in October 2003 describes the procedures adopted by RVD in the allocation of building numbers and the launching of building numbering campaigns to encourage proper display of building numbers.

Special Survey on Building Numbers in October 2003

8. The building numbering campaign conducted in 2000 showed that 85% of the buildings inspected had their building numbers properly displayed. In order to ascertain the position in the busy districts, RVD carried out a special survey on 20 busy streets in the territory in October 2003. The results showed that 77% of the shops in the selected streets in the urban areas had their numbers properly displayed whereas the compliance rate in the New Territories was 71%. Letters were subsequently sent to the owners and occupiers of properties which do not have the numbers displayed. Inspections have been carried out in January 2004 to ensure compliance.

Building Numbering Campaign 2003 and Follow-up Action

9. The 2003 campaign was launched on 5 December 2003 when some 93,000 campaign letters and posters/leaflets were issued to owners and tenants of all ground floor units and to Owners' Corporation/Mutual Aid Committees in a move to promote the display and use of correct building numbers. Spot checks on major streets will be carried out in March and April 2004 when on-the-spot advice will be given if the requirements are not complied with.

10. Based on the results of a review of the campaign and spot checks mentioned in paragraph 9 above, RVD will consider stepping up enforcement action against offenders who fail to properly display building numbers.

Allocation of Building Numbers to Shopping Arcade

11. As a general rule, a separate number is allocated to each ground floor unit having frontage onto a street. Where a building comprises a large number of shops which do not have street frontage (e.g. shops in an arcade), it is not advisable to separately number all the shops without street frontage due to the following reasons:

- (i) for the visiting public, these numbers might not serve a useful identification purpose as the numbers would be displayed in front of the shops inside an arcade and not facing a street;
- (ii) the shops in an arcade usually have designated unit numbers (e.g. Shop 1, 2, 3, etc.) which equally serve the identification purpose. Indeed, in such cases, adding another building number can cause confusion;
- (iii) subsequent re-partitioning of these shops is expected to be quite frequent, necessitating frequent changes to the numbering and bringing confusion to the public; and
- (iv) a large number of shops may be involved in one existing building with one building number already assigned. Designating additional numbers to the shops will complicate the sequence of numbering in the street.

12. In some shopping arcades, a few shop units do have street frontage. In deciding whether these shops could be separately numbered, RVD will consider the possibility of future subdivision or merging of units as a result of ownership/tenancy changes, the developer's preference and whether there is a designated unit system in identifying these units.

Highways Department
Rating and Valuation Department
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
March 2004

**Bills Committee on
Buildings (Amendment) Bill 2003**

Building Numbers

Purpose

This paper describes Government's enforcement to ensure the proper display of building numbers. This is in response to the Bills Committee's request at its meeting on 9 September 2003.

Background

2. Section 32(2) of the Buildings Ordinance empowers Government to require a building which fronts or abuts on any street to be marked with a building number. To ensure that building numbers are properly displayed at all new buildings, the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) will allocate building numbers to new buildings within one month of their completion. Moreover, RVD has issued a leaflet on the required size and format of building numbers to be displayed and the suitable locations for their display. A copy of the leaflet is at the Appendix.

Current Situation

3. As regards existing buildings, RVD launches a building numbering campaign from time to time to ensure proper display of building numbers by owners. During the past three campaigns in 1996, 1998 and 2000, RVD wrote to owners/occupiers of all ground floor units and owners' corporations to remind them of the need to display building numbers properly. Sample surveys were carried out afterwards. The results showed that about 85% of the buildings inspected had their building numbers properly displayed. The next campaign will be conducted in December 2003.

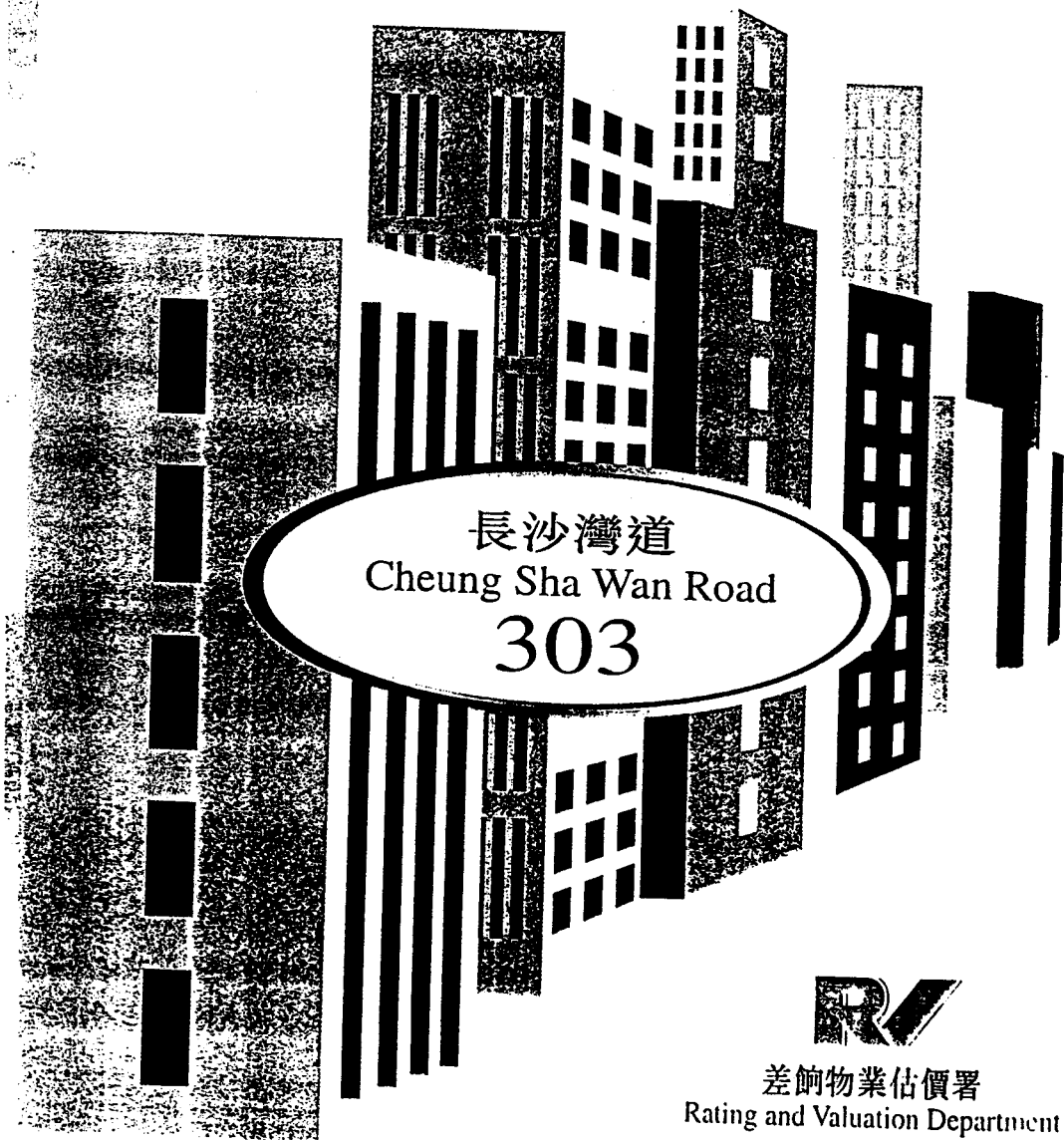
4. As regards non-compliance cases, RVD would take follow up actions, including issuing warning letters to remind the owners/occupiers to properly display the building numbers. In most cases, the building numbers are not displayed because the streets concerned have not yet been named or the building numbers have been removed or damaged during the course of renovation. Therefore, when RVD becomes aware that a property at street-level has been let or is undergoing renovation work, it will issue letters to the owners/occupiers concerned to remind them to properly display the building number after the completion of such works. In the majority of cases, the owners would display their building numbers properly after receiving RVD's letters.

5. In general, RVD also allocates building numbers to ground floor shops. However, for shops located inside a shopping arcade which share a common entrance, RVD will only allocate a building number to the entrance of the shopping arcade. The numbering of individual shops within the shopping arcade will be left to the developer.


6. We consider that the existing arrangements have generally fulfilled Government's requirements in respect of displaying building numbers. However, we will keep the situation under review and consider stepping up enforcement action as appropriate.

門牌裝妥 方便你我

For Everyone's Convenience
Display Building Numbers



長沙灣道
Cheung Sha Wan Road
303


差餉物業估價署
Rating and Valuation Department

40毫米為宜。門牌號數或門牌本身的顏色應與背景成明顯的對比。損壞及號數不齊的門牌，應盡快修理和更換。

請注意：建築物條例第40條訂明，任何人士如未有遵照規定標示樓宇門牌號數，以及損毀及遮蔽樓宇門牌號數會受處罰。

IS YOUR BUILDING NUMBER DISPLAYED ?

For the convenience of the visiting public, which includes the postal, public utility and emergency services as well as your friends, your building number should be clearly displayed at the entrance to your premises. If it is not, please take steps to do so.

IS THE CORRECT NUMBER DISPLAYED ?

The correct number for your premises is that contained in the subject address shown in the covering letter. If you are in any doubt, please contact Rating and Valuation Department at 13/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon or telephone :

2150 8430 for properties in Hong Kong

2150 8442 for properties in Kowloon and New Kowloon

2150 8628 for properties in New Territories and Islands

IS THE NUMBER CLEARLY VISIBLE ?

The number should be located above or at the side of the entrance to the premises, and should not be obscured. The recommended minimum height and width for a number are 50 mm and 40 mm respectively. The colour of the number or number plate should contrast clearly with its background. Damaged numbers should be repaired and missing numbers replaced as soon as possible.

Please note : Section 40 of the Buildings Ordinance prescribes penalties for any person who fails to comply with an order to affix a building number, and defaces or obscures a building number.