

Legislative Council Panel on Housing

Installation of Condensation Drain Pipes for Air-conditioners in Public Rental Housing Blocks

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the proposal to install condensation drain pipes for air-conditioners at the external walls of public rental housing blocks to address the problem of water dripping from air-conditioners.

Background

2. Water dripping from air-conditioners causes nuisance to the neighbourhood. Public housing blocks built after 1996 are provided with condensation drain pipes. Tenants in these blocks can connect their air-conditioners to these drain pipes for discharging condensation water during installation. For public housing blocks built before 1996, which are not provided with condensation drain pipes, we remind tenants from time to time to prevent dripping through proper installation and maintenance of their air-conditioners, use of condensation-free air-conditioners or fixing flexible lead hoses to redirect condensate to the flats.

Water Dripping From Air-conditioners

3. Dripping from air-conditioners is a frequent complaint. Upon receipt of such complaints, Housing Department staff will first warn the tenants verbally or issue warning letters asking tenants to rectify the situation. Non-compliant cases will be referred to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for follow-up actions under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance. From January 2005 to October 2005, the Housing Department received 16 389 complaints about water dripping from air-conditioners. 14 351 verbal warnings and 2 576 written warnings were given, and 20 cases were subsequently referred to the FEHD for follow-up. Our operational experience showed that most tenants would rectify the dripping problem promptly after warning. Only a few persistent cases required further action by the FEHD.

4. Water dripping from air-conditioners is difficult to detect and eradicate by tenants and the estate management. To effectively prevent nuisance from dripping air-conditioners, there have been suggestions from the Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) and other quarters that condensation drain pipes for air-conditioners should be retrofitted to existing public housing blocks. In some estates, e.g. Ko Yee Estate and Tsz Ching Estate, EMAC Funds^{Note} were used to install air-conditioner drain pipes as an estate environmental improvement project. Photographs showing the completed installations in these two estates are at **Annex A**. For other estates, the EMAC Funds have been used on hygiene-related or community activities and the amount left is insufficient to finance improvement work of this nature.

5. With the implementation of the Marking Scheme for Tenancy Enforcement in Public Housing Estates in August 2003, there has been suggestion that water dripping from air-conditioners should be made a misdeed. To ensure that the enforcement arrangement for water dripping from air-conditioners is fair and consistent, we consider it desirable to provide the necessary support to help tenants tackle the problem before punitive measures under the Marking Scheme are considered.

Proposal

6. There are 670 public rental housing blocks that do not have air-conditioner condensation drain pipes, categorised as follows :

Category		No. of Blocks
Category A	Rental blocks where flats have balconies or verandahs adjacent to the living areas	336
Category B1	Rental blocks where flats do not have balconies or verandahs	143
Category B2	Rental blocks where the balconies or verandahs of all or some of the flats are separated from the living area by kitchens, lavatories or solid walls	191

Details of these blocks are at **Annex B**.

^{Note} The Housing Authority allocates a lump sum (calculated on the basis of the number of flats) to the EMAC Fund annually for each public housing estate to enable the EMAC to organise hygiene-related and community activities, or to carry out minor estate enhancement works.

7. For the 336 rental blocks under Category A, the air-conditioners are normally installed within the balconies or verandahs. Condensation water from the air-conditioners can be discharged conveniently and effectively through the existing drainage systems in the balconies or verandahs. There is no need to install air-conditioner condensation drain pipes in these public rental housing blocks.

8. For the other 334 blocks located at 78 rental estates under Categories B1 and B2, the air-conditioners are installed at the windows at the external walls and the condensation water cannot be discharged conveniently. Some tenants use lead hoses to divert condensation water from their air-conditioners to the external walls of the buildings, causing unsightly stains on the external walls. The installation of drain pipes in these buildings for proper discharge of condensation water from air-conditioners is therefore recommended.

Implementation

9. Installation of drain pipes on the external walls of building blocks requires the use of gondolas and scaffolding, which will cause disturbance to tenants. It is also not cost-effective to put up gondolas and scaffolding for this sheer purpose. Hence, we propose to carry out the installation works alongside external wall redecoration or cleaning works of the estate. With this arrangement, however, it would take about eight to nine years to complete the works for all estates. In order to speed up the programme, we will carry out installation work separately for estates which are not due for redecoration in the next few years. We plan to commence the improvement works in 2006 for completion by 2010. The total installation costs amount to about \$90 million. We will consult the EMACs before commencement.

10. Upon completion of the improvement works, we will further review the situation and consider whether dripping from air-conditioners should be made a misdeed under the Marking Scheme for Tenancy Enforcement in Public Housing Estates.

Tenants Purchase Scheme Estates

11. For Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates without provision of condensation drain pipes, the Housing Department will encourage the Owners Corporations concerned to carry out similar improvement works. The Maintenance Funds which the Housing Authority injected to the estates upon their sale can be used for this purpose. As one of the owners of TPS estates, the Housing Authority will also contribute to the project costs if it is necessary for the owners to contribute to the improvement works.

Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
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**Condensation drain pipes of air-conditioners installed at
Ko Yee Estate and Tsz Ching Estate**



Ko Yee Estate



Tsz Ching Estate

**Public rental housing blocks
without air-conditioner condensation drain pipes**

Category	Block Type and Design	No. of Blocks
A	Rental blocks where flats have balconies/verandahs adjacent to the living areas	336
	a. Mark V Block	10
	b. Converted Block	19
	c. Slab Block (Old, Standard Type)	212
	d. Cruciform Block	11
	e. Tower Block (Single, Twin)	66
	f. Ziggurat Block	6
	g. Trident 1 Block	7
	h. Non-standard Block	5
B1	Rental blocks where flats do not have balconies/verandahs	143
	a. Harmony Blocks (completed before March 1996)	121
	b. Housing for Senior Citizens (Ancillary Facilities Block & Type '2')	16
	c. Rural Housing	6
B2	Rental blocks where the balconies/verandahs of all or some of the flats are separated from the living area by kitchens, lavatories or solid walls	191
	a. New Slab Block	1
	b. Linear Block	42
	c. Trident (Type 2, 3 & 4) Blocks	19
	d. Harmony - Rural Housing	9
	e. Cruciform Block	1
	f. Non-standard Block	7
	g. H Blocks (Single, Twin, Triple)	96
	h. I Blocks (Single, Double, Triple)	16
Sub-total for (B) :		334
Total (A) and (B) :		670