



香港房屋經理學會  
The Hong Kong Institute of Housing

Ref: HKIH/0052-13/CY/Sec

24 October 2013

Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Chairman  
Panel on Environmental Affairs  
Legislative Council Secretariat

Dear Sirs,

Re: Task Force on External Lighting Stakeholders and the Public Engagement Exercise

We, The Hong Kong Institute of Housing, are the professional body in Hong Kong for those who are engaged in the co-ordination and execution of housing service incorporating the design, provision, improvement, rehabilitation, management and administration of all types of housing. The Institute's members are responsible for the management of more than 70% of the housing stock in Hong Kong. In view of the technical issues associated with the regulation of external lighting, we would like to share our opinions as follows: -

**Appropriate preset time**

1. Due to the high density of buildings and the close proximity of commercial and residential buildings in Hong Kong, it is agreed that adopting a lighting zoning system to differentiate the level of control on external lighting to reflect the different level of human activities, land use properties and prevailing environmental brightness in different areas within a city is impractical.

2. As regards the specific time for switching off external lighting, we may consider to separate building into 2 parts: (i) first part: above the bottom of podium level or 5.8m (whichever is lower); and (ii) second part: below the bottom of podium level or 5.8m (whichever is lower). According to the Guide on Erection & Maintenance of Advertising Signs from Building Department, the minimum clearance for projecting a sign over a street is 5.8m. We assume this height level would not affect residents in its building or adjacency of commercial buildings.

The specific time for switching off external lighting including shop signs, advertising signs, video walls and decorative lighting for facades and building features for first and second parts of a building mentioned above could be 11p.m. to 7a.m. and 1a.m. to 7a.m. respectively. For first part, it makes reference to the time adopted for regulating noise nuisance and generally meets the expectation of a darker environment for sleep. For second part, it is regard to the closing time of MTR or public transportation (around 12:45p.m.) which accommodate safety environment for people taking home after work or entertainment.

### **Scope of the switch-off requirement**

3. As mentioned above, the switch-off requirement for lighting installations above the specific height (e.g. 5.8m or the bottom of podium, whichever is lower) should be switched-off including shop signs, advertising signs, video walls and decorative lighting for facades and building features regardless of whether the lighting installations are interior or exterior in the specific time (11p.m. or 1a.m. to 7a.m.).

4. The switch-off requirement should not apply to lighting necessary for security, safety or operational reasons such as road/street lighting, lighting at public transport interchange or terminus, outdoor car parks and constructions sites etc.

### **Exemption to be granted**

5. The certain types of businesses such as entertainment facilities might open after the preset time, and their shop-front signs might be exempted from the switch-off requirement during their business hours. However, the limitation for lumens of the shop-front signs or luminaires should be controlled after preset time to below certain lumens in order to minimize the negative effect to the premises next to the signboard. Shops on upper floors may consider erecting signs on the ground floors of their buildings to indicate that they are still open after the preset time. The exemption should not be granted for any non-static lighting for decorative, promotional or advertising purpose including flashing signs and video walls, etc.

6. For decorative lighting during Festive Seasons, the exemptions could be granted to decorative lightings (static and non-static) three nights/early mornings before the respective statutory holidays of Christmas, New Year, Lunar New Year, 1 July and 1 October until the morning of the day following the holidays to highlight the celebration atmosphere for enjoyment by both HK citizens and tourists. It will make the continuity of the holiday, for example, the public holidays for Christmas and New Year fall on 25 & 26 December and 1 January, subject to the preset time, exemption from the switch-off requirement for decorative lightings should start from

11p.m. on 22 December (or 1a.m. on 23 December) until 7a.m. of 4 January. There will be no gap between 2 holidays.

### **New installation requirement**

7. The Minor Work Control System (MWCS) is governing the erection of advertising signs under Building Ordinance (Cap 123) and Public Health & Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132). Other than the material and structure safety, the lumens of the advertising signs should also be governed under MWCS in order to have better control of the external lighting. The guideline could be extended to the erection of video walls as well. For example, apply maximum of lumens for signs or video walls for certain height of installation.

Building Department could establish Outdoor Lighting Code apply to new construction of all kinds in much the same way as a building code, electrical code, or plumbing code, and consideration should be given to enacting the lighting code using a similar legal structure to these.

### **Implementation approach**

8. For implementing the switch-off requirement, legislation should be introduced though a charter scheme can be implemented during lead time required for the legislation process. Cross government departments should be joining together for implementing the scheme. For example: Environmental Department takes charge of the charter scheme and legislation arrangement, Building Department and EMSD to amend guideline for minor works requirement and establish the lighting code, and Police to test the lumens of road/street lighting to make sure the brightness after preset time.

We believe after implementing of the switch-off requirement, the issues of light nuisance and energy wastage could be improved.

Yours sincerely,

For and on behalf of

The Hong Kong Institute of Housing



Cora Yuen

President