

**Subcommittee on Waterworks (Amendment) Regulation 2017
 (“The Amendment Regulation”)**

**Response to the List of follow-up actions
 arising from the discussion at the meeting on 20 June 2017**

Response to item (a)

1. The Administration has noted the views expressed by the deputations in the following aspects and would like to provide a collective response as below.

Commencement of the Amendment Regulation

2. The Amendment Regulation is to update the list of the latest applicable standards currently published on WSD website in the Schedule 2 of the Waterworks Regulation (“WWR”) due to the imminent need to attain the legal certainty. Since this list of latest applicable standards for plumbing materials had been used by both WSD and the plumbing industry in processing of relevant plumbing applications and plumbing works administratively for the time being, we do not anticipate that the industry would have any difficulty in meeting the requirements after the Amendment Regulation come into operation on 14 July 2017.

Acceptance of non-British Standards

3. Under the Regulation 20 (1) of the WWR, every pipe or fitting shall conform to what are known as the British Standards. The British Standards, which have generally applied to pipes and fittings used in developments in Hong Kong for over 75 years, are promulgated by the British Standards Institution and commonly adopted in developed countries such as UK and Singapore as the standards for the pipes and fittings.

4. We have noted the views expressed by the deputations regarding the general acceptance of a Japanese Standard for plastic pipe for flushing purpose or some non-British Standards for fire services installations. While we will maintain the standards promulgated by the British Standards Institution as the core applicable standards for plumbing materials, the Administration will keep an open mind to adopt other applicable standards, whenever necessary.

5. In March 2016, WSD had set up the Technical Committee on Plumbing (“TCP”) with members of representatives from professional bodies, plumbing trade, construction industries, suppliers, standard organization, laboratory and government officials from various departments. The terms of reference of TCP include to keep under review, and to collect and consider views, comments or feedback received from the industry on technologies, standards and testing on plumbing matters. In fact, by virtue of Regulation 25(2) of the WWR, the Water Authority has approved the use of stainless steel fitting which is of Australian Standard AS3688:2016 and this non-British Standard has been included in the proposed paragraph 20 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the WWR. Other suggestions received in the deputations will also be discussed and followed up by the TCP.

Regulation of Fire Services Installations

6. We also noted the suggestion of introducing a separate part in the Schedule 2 of the WWR for fire services installations, which is non-potable system, to facilitate a more effective control on fire services system. We understand that there is a set of requirements and standards listed in the Codes of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment and Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Installations and Equipment issued by Fire Services Department by virtue of Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations. The Administration will maintain an open mind to discuss with the relevant stakeholders for this matter. Suggestions received in the deputations will be discussed and followed up by the TCP.

Responses to Technical Questions in Schedule 2

7. In the proposed paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the WWR, “*A bend or curve must not be made in any pipe so as to diminish the waterway or alter the internal diameter of the pipe.*” This means that the bend or curve shall be made and kept circular in shape without distortion along the pipeline. The proposed amendment is only a textual amendment without any change in meaning.

8. In the proposed paragraph 1 of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the WWR “*Draw-off taps and stop valves.....must be capable of resisting a pressure of at least 1,600kPa....*” Pursuant to BS EN 200:2008, the testing pressure of a draw-off taps is 1,600kPa while the working pressure of which is 1,000kPa. Considering the requirements are also set out in relevant prescribed standards in

the proposed paragraphs 14 to 19 of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the WWR, we would propose to repeal this paragraph to avoid ambiguity.

Response to item (b)

9. From July 2016 to March 2017, the total number of completed plumbing works approved by the WSD was 4,289.

10. The whole approval process of the applications generally involves vetting of plumbing proposals submitted by applicants, checking of the pipes/fittings submissions and inspection of the completed plumbing works. WSD does not readily have information on the processing time needed for handling these applications, but we can capture the total processing time¹ of the whole process, i.e. from first application for new meters to the final approval of the completed works. The total processing time has included not only the time taken by WSD to handle the application but also the time taken by the applicants for submission of revised proposals, supplementary information and rectification of defective works.

11. Since the excess lead-in-water incident, WSD has taken forward the following measures to enhance the control of installation and construction of the inside service including :

- (a) To enhance control of pipes and fittings installed in inside service, WSD has imposed a five-year validity period of general acceptance (“GA”) for water supply pipes and fittings since August 2015. WSD has also stipulated the requirements for submission of supporting document of the lead free soldering materials.
- (b) To enhance the inspection and approval of the inside service, WSD has stipulated the requirements for carrying out non-destructive tests on solder pipe joints and water sampling test for testing of heavy metals including lead since August 2015.

¹ WSD’s performance targets for (i) “Reply to application for metered supply to new building projects” is 20 working days regarding WSD’s response time to application submitted by applicants; and (ii) “Inspection of new building projects” is 7 working days regarding WSD’s response time to request for inspection of completed plumbing works. The achievements in 2015/16 were 97.1% and 98.44% for item (i) and (ii) respectively.

- (c) To strengthen the management of the licensed plumbers (LPs), WSD has developed a detailed checklist for inspection and approval of completed plumbing works and enhanced the point penalty system for LPs stressing the importance of using compliant plumbing materials and proper discharging of the duties of LPs since October 2015.

12. Due to the above measures, the average total processing time for the approved completed plumbing works of new buildings was increased from 155 days in 2014 to 222 days in 2015. In view of the above, WSD has introduced the following enhancement measures for processing of applications since 2016 :

- Increased staff resources by redeploying existing staff as well as recruiting retired civil servants and contract staff to clear the backlog
- Launched a pilot scheme of which LPs could opt for carrying out interim inspections of laid underground pipes or final inspection of new building projects to the prescribed requirements in order to shorten the time for interim or final inspections of new building projects

With the above enhancement measures, the total average processing time in 2016 has then been decreased to 150 days.

13. To further speed up the approval process, WSD has introduced the following enhancement measures for processing of applications since February 2017 :

- Provision of a submission checklist for plumbing proposals for use by applicants
- Streamlining of the vetting procedure of plumbing proposals
- Webpage function for preparation of material submission

14. WSD will continue to review the internal workflow and introduce enhancement measures with a view to speeding up the whole approval process.

Development Bureau
26 June 2017