

Pollution from Industrial Buildings

Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing,  
Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulation 90

It is becoming increasingly apparent that more stringent measures must be taken in order to minimise the effects of untreated noxious effluents getting into drainage systems and causing pollution to water courses and the sea. Such effluents can also seriously impair the normal processes of sewage treatment, where such plants exist, or damage pipes. There is also the possibility of Government's sewers being overloaded or damaged by industrial effluents.

2. The legislation touching on this topic is contained within the Buildings Ordinance sections 24 and 28 and the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulation 90:-

- (a) The provisions contained in section 28 state that drainage works are to be carried out to my satisfaction and in the event I opine that existing works are inadequate an order may be served,
- (b) Section 24 permits an order to be served where drainage works have been or are being carried out in contravention of the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance, and
- (c) Under the provisions of Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulation 90 I may require the owner of a building to provide suitable neutralizing tanks, cooling tanks, petrol intercepting traps, grease traps or other suitable provision where it is intended to discharge from a building into any drain or sewer certain types of effluent identified in the Regulation.

3. Until recently I have, in the main and as part of the centralised processing system, only consulted the Environmental Protection Department on those cases involving a single occupancy specialised industrial building, where the processes to be pursued are known, and advice on appropriate measures to be taken to treat the effluent is then sought. I propose to extend the area of consultancy in future.

4. In order to be able to check on effluent treatment provisions I would like to draw your attention to the need to enquire from your client information on the proposed industrial processes which the intended building occupants will pursue, and ensure that at drainage plan submission stage building uses are clearly stated and adequate provisions are made to treat any related noxious effluents. Failure to provide this information may prompt a rejection of your drainage proposals under section 16(1)(i).

/The need .....

5. In the case of "flatted factory" development where multi occupancy is to be expected, the assumption will be made that the industrial undertakings and places of work will discharge effluents of such volume or nature as to call for the provision of drainage facilities other than required under Regulation 5(1) of the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulations. The following notes are recommended for your consideration:-

- (a) an independent system for the drainage of industrial effluents,
- (b) the reservation of space in some units for the installation of treatment facilities, and
- (c) the delineation of space at ground level, preferably in a common area conveniently located for the connection to Government sewers, for the provision of treatment works.

6. The need to provide a petrol interceptor in areas used for the parking of vehicles and the use of grease traps to collect discharge from restaurants is well-known, and standard details are available for these items. The preferred contemporary practice regarding other types of industrial effluent and appropriate methods of treatment is not quite so standardised, or so clear, however, and in cases of doubt you may need to obtain the advice of consultants.

7. In addition to tackling the pollution problem at plans submission stage, it is also worth mentioning that more attention will be focused on illegal and insanitary drains and sewers in future. To this end a unit has already been formed within the Buildings Ordinance Office with the responsibility of seeking out such cases with a view to exercising my powers under sections 24 and 28.

8. This practice note is considered as introductory to acquaint you with my general concern and the manner in which initially I propose to tackle the problem under the legislation as it now stands. As further information regarding the various processes which can be anticipated to produce noxious effluent, and the preferred methods of treatment, become available, I will make it available to you.



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Building Authority

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