

Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) (Amendment) Regulation 2021 to be gazetted on Friday

A spokesperson for the Security Bureau said today (June 2) that the Government will publish the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) (Amendment) Regulation 2021 (the Amendment Regulation) in the Gazette on Friday (June 4), with a view to promoting the use of stand-alone battery-operated fire detectors of the owners/occupants' own volition in buildings and premises, particularly in domestic premises.

The spokesperson said, "Early detection of fire and an early warning to building occupants for timely evacuation are of paramount importance to save their lives in case of a fire. A stand-alone fire detector is a self-contained battery-operated device that incorporates a fire detector and an alarm, serving the purpose of detecting a fire and giving an audible alarm warning or other form of warning to building occupants during the incipient stage of fire. With prompt notification, occupants can have more time for evacuation before the escape route becomes impassable due to smoke and heat.

"Having regard to the effectiveness of stand-alone fire detectors in reducing fire losses, the minimal technical skills required for their installation and maintenance as well as their rising importance in domestic fire protection, the Government proposes to amend the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (FS(IE)R) to exempt stand-alone fire detectors from the application of regulations 6(1) and 7(1) of the FS(IE)R, to the effect that owners/occupants of any buildings/premises will not be required to engage registered fire service installation contractors (RFSICs) for the installation, maintenance, inspection or repair of any stand-alone fire detectors which are installed of the owners/occupants' own volition. Moreover, owners and occupants will also be exempted from the statutory duty of keeping the stand-alone fire detectors in efficient working order at all times and having them inspected by RFSICs at least once every 12 months as specified under regulation 8 of the FS(IE)R. Nevertheless, as to other stand-alone fire detectors that are required by or pursuant to the law to be installed, they will continue to be regulated by relevant statutory requirements of the FS(IE)R; and the owners have to continue to comply with the relevant statutory duty.

"The Fire Services Department (FSD) will launch promotional activities to explain to the public the benefits and the use of the stand-alone fire detectors through social media and traditional media. The FSD will publish guidelines for the public on the selection of appropriate stand-alone fire detectors which meet established national/international standards of the Mainland, the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia. There will also be tips and procedures for maintaining the effectiveness of the detectors by the owners themselves in these guidelines."

The Government has consulted the relevant trades on the proposal and conducted 10 briefing sessions from December 2020 to March 2021. The trades are in support of the proposal. An information note regarding the use and benefits of stand-alone fire detectors and the related legislative proposal was also uploaded onto the website of the FSD (www.hkfsd.gov.hk/eng/source/safety/safd/Stand_alone_Fire_Detectors_Promotion_eng_20210325_145025.pdf) in March for public information.

The Amendment Regulation will be tabled at the Legislative Council for negative vetting on June 9, and is expected to become effective on September 1.