

Hospital Authority provided supplementary information on Kwong Wah Hospital cable trunking coating incident (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for the Hospital Authority (HA) gave the following update regarding the thickness of the cable trunking coating in Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH) today (November 5):

The independent expert appointed by the HA, after a site visit to the cable trunkings and inspection of contractor's measurement methodology at KWH new building, has pointed out that the coating thickness measured by elcometer can only be taken as reference due to its non-determinacy. The independent expert has also instructed HA's facility personnel to collect cable trunking samples at KWH, which have already been sent to an accredited laboratory as arranged by the expert for thorough testing, including measuring the weight and thickness of the cable trunking coating material with specialised laboratory equipment. The expert will later analyse the testing results and submit a detailed report to the HA to verify whether the materials meet the standards.

Mr Andrew Wong, Chief Manager (Capital Planning) of the HA, said the previous testing reports submitted by the contractor claimed that the coating thickness of the cable trunking was in compliance with the standards. The HA then responded to the media based on the information provided by the contractor. Meanwhile, the HA also adopted a very prudent attitude and appointed an independent expert to conduct testing and review the test results submitted by the contractor.

After receiving the report from the independent expert, the HA will take appropriate actions to follow up stringently if any non-compliance of standard is found. Mr Wong said, "The HA will review the responsibilities of the contractors and persons concerned involving in the incident and seriously pursue their responsibilities. If any criminals elements are found in this process, the HA will report to law enforcement authorities for further investigation."

Mr Wong added that the thickness of the cable trunking coating does not pose additional risks to the safety of patients and staff nor impact the building's structure, fire safety and hospital operations. The coating is used to cover the metal shell of the cable trunking so as to prevent rusting and to enhance the trunking's durability without electrical conduction and communication purposes. Insufficient thickness will hence only limit the durability of trunking and shorten its life-span. The cable trunking may

therefore need to be replaced early. The cable trunking is mainly installed in sealed maintenance ducts or above ceilings. They serve as conduits for storing cables, which are normally non-accessible to patients or the public.

On-site professionals verified the material quality certificates provided by the contractor before installing the cable trunking in accordance with the contract. The HA has written to the contractor again last week to request a formal report and documents and sought their explanation on the standards of the relevant materials.

Mr Wong said that the HA attaches great importance to the quality of hospital works. If any standard non-compliance is found in the materials, the HA will strictly pursue relevant liabilities and follow up on the necessary remedial measures with the contractor. As KWH new building has already been in full operation, while the cable trunkings were installed in different locations of the new building, reinstalling all cable trunking might affect the operation of parts of the new building. If the relevant materials are found to fail to meet the standards, the HA will pursue the project consultant and contractor to make an assessment and, without affecting the operation of the hospital, reinstall the substandard cable trunking in a prioritised manner. For those materials which cannot be replaced immediately, the HA will request contractor to take all other practicable remedial including strengthening inspection and maintenance of the cable trunking. The HA will also claim the contractor any additional expenses incurred by the HA in accordance with the contract terms due to the substandard of the materials.

Mr Wong reiterated that although the thickness of the cable trunking coating does not pose additional risks to the hospital, the HA still takes the incident very seriously and will investigate thoroughly and pursue stringent actions if any violations are found.

