

Housing Authority endorses Drainage Enhancement Programme for public rental housing flats

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority's (HA) Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) endorsed today (March 14) the Drainage Enhancement Programme (DEP) for existing public rental housing (PRH) flats. It also approved the amendment of one misdeed item under the Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in Public Housing Estates (the Marking Scheme).

The drainage enhancement works include: (1) improvement to the locations of open ends of vent pipes on roofs to address the building wake effect; (2) additional connecting branch pipes to collect used water from hand-washing basins to replenish the water inside the traps of floor drains to prevent loss of water seal; and (3) addition of independent U-traps to the toilet floor drains in adjacent flats which have been connected to a common U-trap through a common waste pipe before connecting to the soil pipe, so as to prevent gas and odours from passing from one flat to its adjacent flat.

"The Buildings Department issued a new Practice Note in 2021 relating to the above-ground drainage system. Although the Practice Note has no retrospective effect on existing buildings, the HA will launch the DEP to enhance the drainage system of PRH flats covered by the programme where feasible in light of the enhanced design standards. The entire programme is expected to take about two and a half years to complete and the estimated total expenditure is \$619 million. In view of the large number of estates involved, we will prioritise the works according to a basket of factors such as estates/blocks where confirmed COVID-19 cases have been reported or are subject to Compulsory Testing Notices; the age of the estates or blocks; the percentage of elderly tenants living therein," a spokesman for the HA said.

To deter the resistance of individual tenants who refuse HA to carry out works or inspections efficiently, SHC approved amending misdeed item C5 of the Marking Scheme "Denying HD staff or staff representing HD entry for repairs responsible by HD" to read "Not allowing Housing Authority (HA) or persons authorised by HA to inspect or carry out inside the leased premises or at any area pertaining to the leased premises (including but not limited to the exterior wall, corridor wall, ventilation window, metal gate) works for which HA is responsible or for compliance with statutory requirements or for implementation of HA's repair, maintenance or enhancement programme covering the building of which the leased premises form part".

As a preventive measure to combat the COVID-19 epidemic, the HA has launched the Drainage Inspection Programme (DIP) since end-October 2020 to proactively inspect the communal drainage pipes located externally at 600

blocks and those located inside 410 000 flats at 975 blocks. After the launch of the programme, the scope of inspection was extended to cover the internal drainage pipes of those flats which had communal drainage pipes located externally so that the number of flats to be inspected was increased to about 800 000.

"Inspection of all external communal drainage pipes at 600 blocks was completed in June 2021. As for the drainage pipes inside flats, all drainage defects found in the course of inspection were repaired immediately where possible. As at mid-February 2022, we also identified that about 41 000 flats had disconnected the vent pipes of HA standard water closets. These are unacceptable alterations. The openings left due to disconnection were capped and sealed immediately and we issued notices to these tenants and required reconnection of the vent pipes at their own expense. We will provide assistance to tenants through 'tenant-to-pay' services if they request HA to arrange such works and agree to pay the cost of the works and supervision fee. We will act in accordance with the existing mechanism for appropriate tenancy actions if they are uncooperative or refuse to comply without reasonable grounds," the spokesman said.