



Bedspace Apartments

Code of Practice



HONG KONG

LASC-VI (07-2017)

FOREWORD

This Code of Practice sets out technical details for the guidance of operators, owners and other parties concerned in the operation of bedspace apartments. Compliance with the provisions of this Code is a primary way of satisfying the requirements for building safety, fire safety, and sanitation under Part V of the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance. This, however, is not the only way of satisfying such requirements. Other alternatives may also be acceptable if they fulfill equivalent performance.

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1. Introduction

The Code of Practice for the Provision of Means of Escape in Case of Fire 1996, the Code of Practice for Fire Resisting Construction 1996 and the Code of Practice for Means of Access for Firefighting and Rescue 2004 issued by the Buildings Department have been replaced by the Code of Practice for Fire Safety in Buildings 2011 and the following information should make reference to the updated version therein where appropriate.

1.1 Part V of the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance requires that “A licensed bedspace apartment shall comply with such standards and requirements relating to building and fire safety and sanitation as are provided for in Section 18 of the Ordinance”.

1.2 The Authority deals with each case on its merits after full consideration of the circumstances. Nothing herein contained must be taken as in any way derogating from the powers of the Authority to secure reasonable and adequate standards of building and fire safety, and sanitation.

2. Interpretation

For the purpose of this code, unless otherwise stated,

2.1 “Authority” means the Bedspace Apartments Authority.

2.2 “Exit door” means a door from a storey, flat or room, which door gives access from such storey, flat or room on to an exit route.

2.3 “Exit route” means a route by which persons may reach a place of safety outside the bedspace apartment and may include a room, door-way or corridor, other than the internal passageways between bunks.

- 2.4 “Flat” has the same meaning as given in the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance.
- 2.5 “Fire resisting period” (FRP) means the period for which any element of construction, door or fire shutter is capable of resisting the action of fire when tested in accordance with British Standard 476 : Parts 20 to 24 : 1987.
- 2.6 “Travel Distance” means the distance required to be traversed from any point in a storey of a building to either : -
- a) the fire resisting door in the staircase enclosure; or
 - b) if there is no such door, the first stair tread of the staircase.
- 2.7 “B.S.A.” means a Bedspace Apartment and has the same meaning as defined in the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance.
- 2.8 “Compartment” means an enclosed space in a B.S.A. that is separated from all other parts of the B.S.A. by enclosing construction having a fire resisting period of not less than 1 hour and any doors therein having a fire resisting period of not less than ½ hour.
- 2.9 “Room-sealed gas water heater” means a gas water heater which, when in operation, has the combustion air inlet and the combustion products outlet isolated from the room or place in which the gas water heater is installed.

2.10 “Soil fitment” means a water-closet fitment, a trough water-closet or a urinal.

2.11 “Fire service installation or equipment” has the same meaning as defined in Fire Services Ordinance, Cap. 95.

3. Application

3.1 The principles laid down in this Code of Practice are applicable to all B.S.A. s as defined in the Bedspace Apartments Ordinance.

3.2 Where the occupation of the B.S.A. constitutes a special hazard the Authority may require such alterations to the standards laid down in this Code of Practice as in his opinion may be necessary.

4. General Requirements

4.1 All means of escape and fire service installations or equipment within the B.S.A. shall be subject to proper maintenance and to ensure that they are free from obstruction and in good working order at all times.

4.2 Fire-resisting self-closing doors shall not be held in the open position by hooks, wedges or other similar device.

- 4.3 No storage of any description which may jeopardize the escape route(s) is allowed. Escape routes must be kept clear for means of escape purposes and free from any possible source of fire.
- 4.4 All externally hung signs for or on the premises shall not obstruct any approved exit route outside the B.S.A. and shall be regularly and frequently maintained and any indication of danger or dilapidation should be remedied immediately.
- 4.5 All fire service installations or equipment shall be installed by a registered contractor as defined by the Fire Service (Installation Contractors) Regulation (Cap. 95 sub. leg.) of the appropriate class and a certificate (FS 251) issued under the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95 sub. leg.) shall be submitted to the Authority.
- 4.6 All portable fire fighting equipment shall be kept in efficient working order at all times and inspected by a registered contractor as defined by the Fire Service (Installation Contractors) Regulations (Cap. 95 sub. leg.) at least once every 12 months and a certificate (FS 251) issued under the Fire Service (Installations and Equipment) Regulations (Cap. 95 sub. leg.) shall be submitted to the Authority.

- 4.7 No storage of dangerous goods exceeding the exempted quantity will be permitted, i.e. for kerosene – 20 litres; for LPG -130 litres aggregated nominal water capacity. All such shall be properly stored in the kitchen.
- 4.8 The fixed electrical installation, after completion, shall be inspected, tested and certified by electrical worker and contractor who have registered themselves with the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services. A copy of the “Periodic Test Certificate” (WR2) OR “Work Completion Certificate” (WR1) shall be forwarded to the Licensing Authority as proof of compliance. The WR2 shall be endorsed by the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services as required under Section 20 of the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations before forwarding to the Licensing Authority.
- 4.9 Only single beds or double bunks shall be provided.
- 4.10 The void space in any false ceiling, shall not be used for storage purposes.
- 4.11 All unauthorized building works shall be completely removed and the building made good in accordance with the plans approved by the Building Authority.

- 4.12 Single beds or double bunks shall be properly secured to the floor as necessitated by the circumstances.
- 4.13 Defective and broken window frames shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Authority.
- 4.14 Spalling and defective concrete shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Authority.
- 4.15 A telephone shall be provided and maintained in proper working order.
- 5. Fire resisting construction.
 - 5.1 The following walls shall have a F.R.P. of not less than 1 hour and any openings thereto shall be provided with self-closing doors having a F.R.P. of not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ hour :
 - 5.1.1 between the B.S.A. and adjoining flats.
 - 5.1.2 between the B.S.A. and common areas.
 - 5.1.3 between adjoining compartments within the B.S.A..
 - 5.1.4 enclosing hazardous uses.

5.2 Any opening in a wall required by 5.1 to have F.R.P. for the passage of air-conditioning ducts, ventilation ducts, electrical trunking, conduits, pipes and wires or holes left after construction should be protected with fire dampers or other suitable form of fire stop to maintain the required FRP of that compartment wall or floor. Where ducts, pipes, wires and any insulation passing through the wall is of combustible material, such material should be contained within an enclosure having an FRP corresponding to that of the surrounding structure. Where access openings are provided to the enclosure, such opening shall be provided with self-closing doors or securable covers having an FRP of not less than half that of the enclosure.

6. Fire Service Requirements

6.1 Portable fire extinguisher(s) shall be provided in accordance with the following scale :

- (a) Where the B.S.A. occupies only one flat, one 9L CO₂/water or one 4.5 kg CO₂ or one 2 kg dry powder fire extinguisher is to be provided in the sleeping area in a readily accessible position. Where the B.S.A. occupies more than one flat, the number of fire extinguisher is to be increased in proportion to the number of flats.

- (b) One fire blanket (Minimum size 1.44m²) and one 4.5 kg CO₂ or one 2 kg dry powder fire extinguisher are to be provided in every kitchen.
- 6.2 A notice in Chinese on the operation method of fire extinguisher(s) and fire blanket shall be prominently displayed at the location where such equipment is provided.
- 6.3 Manual fire alarm call points are to be provided at strategic locations of the B.S.A., e.g. outside the kitchen and near to the exit(s).
- 6.4 Where the maximum floor area of any one compartment exceeds 230 square metres an automatic sprinkler system covering the entire premises shall be provided and installed in accordance with the Rules of the Loss Prevention Council unless Fireman's access is provided either directly from ground/podium floor level or via open balconies on upper floors to the satisfaction of the Authority.

7. Means of escape
 - 7.1 All internal passageways and doors in passageways shall have a minimum width of not less than 750 mm and be kept free from obstruction at all times. Internal passageways must be inter-communicable at the ends.
 - 7.2 The maximum travel distance from the farthest point of B.S.A. to the main exit door or to the point where escape is possible in two directions shall be not more than 18 m.
 - 7.3 The exit route width shall be not less than 900 mm throughout.
 - 7.4 The clear height in the exit route(s) shall be not less than 2 m.
 - 7.5 Where a B.S.A. comprises more than one flat or one compartment, exit signs shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Authority.
 - 7.6 Where the population of the B.S.A. exceeds 50 all doors across exit routes shall open in the direction of exit.
 - 7.7 Notwithstanding 7.6 no metal security gate shall open across an exit route from another part of the building.

7.8 Exit doors should be openable from the inside without the use of a key.

8. Kitchens

8.1 Every B.S.A. shall be provided with a kitchen enclosed by fire resisting construction having an FRP of not less than 1 hour and openings shall be provided with self-closing doors having an FRP of not less than ½ hour.

8.2 The kitchen shall be provided with a : -

(a) cooking slab unless the cooking is to be done by gas, or electricity;

(b) sink and fittings for the supply of water.

8.3 The door to the kitchen shall not be located adjacent to an exit from the B.S.A..

- 8.4 The kitchen shall have all internal wall surfaces, to a height of at least 1.2 m from the floor, faced with glazed tiles.
- 8.5 All cooking shall be carried out inside the kitchen. Only food warming and water boiling using electricity will be permitted outside the kitchen.
- 8.6 All kerosene stoves should be kept inside the kitchen.
- 8.7 No bathroom, watercloset or communal toilet shall open directly onto a kitchen.
9. Lighting and Ventilation
- 9.1 Every room used for habitation or as a kitchen shall be provided with natural lighting and ventilation.
- 9.2 Such natural lighting and ventilation shall be provided by means of one or more windows having an aggregate area of glass of not less than one-tenth of the area of the floor of the room; and which can, to an extent at least equal in the aggregate to one-sixteenth of the area of the floor of the room, be openable in such manner that the top of the opening of each window is at least 2 m above the level of the floor.
- 9.3 No part of any room used for habitation shall be more than 9 m from a window.

9.4 Where a room-sealed gas water heater serves a bathroom or is installed in any place in a B.S.A. other than in the bathroom, an adequate aperture in an external wall shall be provided to the satisfaction of the Authority, to provide direct access to the external air.

9.5 Every room containing a soil fitment or waste fitment shall be provided with a window having an aggregate area of glass which is not less than one-tenth of the area of the floor of the room; and a part thereof, not less in area than one-sixteenth of the area of the floor of the room, can be opened directly into the open air. The top of the opening portion of the window shall be not less than 2 m above the level of the floor of the room.

10. Enclosed bedspaces

Where bedspaces are enclosed the following will apply :

10.1 The enclosure shall be constructed of non-combustible material.

10.2 An opening having a width of not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ length of the bedspace and a height of the full height of the enclosure shall be provided on the side of the bed facing the passageway.

11. Provision of sanitary requirements and plumbing

11.1 In every B.S.A.

- (a) the number of watercloset fitments provided shall be not less than the number specified in Table I;
- (b) the number of lavatory basins and baths or showers provided shall be not less than the number specified in Table II;

TABLE I

No. of persons residing or likely to reside in the building	No. of watercloset fitments
12-20	2
For every additional 15 persons or part thereof	1 additional fitment

TABLE II

No. of persons residing or likely to reside in the building	No. of lavatory basins	No. of baths or showers
12-20	2	2
For every additional 15 persons or part thereof	1 additional fitment	1 additional fitment

- 11.2 (a) Water supply points may, subject to the provisions of sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) be provided in lieu of lavatory basins and baths or showers.
- (b) The number of water supply points so provided shall be not less than the number of lavatory basins, baths or showers, required, by paragraph 11.1(b).
- (c) Such water supply points shall be provided in a separate cubicle, not less than 0.75 m² in area, or in a water closet.
- (d) For the purposes of this paragraph, any supply of water provided for a sink in any kitchen shall not be a water supply point.
- 11.3 All plumbing works and materials shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Building (Standards of Sanitary Fitments, Plumbing, Drainage Works and Latrines) Regulations (Cap. 123 sub. leg.).