

Matters to be Reviewed

5. Matters Arising from the First Stage of the Review

The outstanding issues arising from the first stage of the review is addressed below:

5.1 Fire Engineering Degree

Fire Engineering degree is a rather new engineering discipline in Hong Kong. Direct benchmarking of such degree with the academic requirement of the HKIE is not feasible as there is no fire engineering discipline in HKIE. In order to assess whether a fire engineering degree satisfies our new registration requirement, the following is suggested :

Suggestion : It is suggested that any holder of this degree or equivalent issued by institutions worldwide shall approach the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) for assessment of the qualification to see if it is equivalent to a local degree. FSD will only consider the application if the reply of HKCAA is affirmative. The registration panel of FSD will then assess the knowledge of the degree holder concerned to see if he fulfils the relevant qualification of the FSIC.

(The registration panel of the above proposal will tentatively be composed of engineers and uniformed staff of Fire Services Department. To obtain a more objective standard in assessing whether a fire engineering or equivalent degree is to be accepted for our registration purpose, would the **Institution of Fire Engineers (HK Branch) (IFE)** please advise if there is any reputable and recognized professional body related to fire engineering which we could make reference to. If not, we may need to consult local tertiary institutions to see if they can be of assistance.)

5.2 Audio/Visual Advisory System

IFE suggested that A/V Systems should be categorized under Class 2 rather than Class 1(b) as contained in the Review Report on Classification and

Qualifications of Fire Service Installation Contractors. The reason why it is categorized under Class 1(b) as in Appendix I is that the A/V system involves component which is mainly electrical in nature.

While members' view on the issue is invited, FSD is intended to provide a list showing the responsibilities of each class of FSIC for clarification purpose as the description of duties under Appendix I may still have some grey areas. Subject to legal advice, the list will be provided in the Code of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installation and Equipment or in the form of Circular Letter issued by FSD.

5.3 Ventilation/Air conditioning Control (VAC) System

A meeting was held with the HK Registered Ventilation Contractors Association (RVCA), Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Association (ACRA) and the Association of Fire Service Installation Contractors (FSICA) on 11.6.2001. RVCA strongly requested that they be allowed to handle VAC systems under the new scheme as the majority of their members would not be able to meet the academic requirement of the new Class 4 FSIC. Currently the majority of VAC systems in the industry were handled by them. If they were not allowed to handle VAC systems, their business will be seriously affected. ACRA and FSICA had also provided their views on this issue during the meeting. Taking into consideration of their comments, the following proposal is drawn up for comments by members:

5.3.1 Introduction of a Class 4S FSIC

Under the proposed new Class 4 FSIC, a special class namely Class 4S FSIC is proposed. This special class of FSIC is tailor-made for the existing Registered Specialist Contractor (Ventilation Works Category) (RSC(V)) taking into consideration of comments from various concerned parties and the existing trade practices.

Suggestion : It is suggested that all existing RSC(V) (registered with Buildings Department before a date to be specified) who have five years proven and relevant working

experience in the field will be eligible for application to become Class 4S FSIC.

Applicants of this class of FSIC may be required to undergo an interview to assess their suitability. Same with other Classes of FSIC, workshop with suitable equipment and the requirement of Registered Electrical Worker (REW) will also be required for this Class 4S FSIC.

5.3.2 Duties of Class 4S FSIC

Suggestion : It is suggested that Class 4S FSIC will only be entitled to handle VAC systems with Method B override controls as stipulated in Section 5.25 of the Codes of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment and Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Installations and Equipment (Extract at Appendix III). For the new Class 4 FSIC, they can handle all types of VAC systems.

5.3.3 Deadline for Application

Suggestion : A deadline will be set after which no application of Class 4S will be accepted.

5.3.4 Since the above proposal will be a one-off arrangement to allow existing RSC(V) to register as a Class 4S FSIC, no further application will be allowed once the initial registration to the newly created Class 4S FSIC from those existing RSC(V) is completed.

Suggestion : It is suggested that renewal of registration of the successful applicant of Class 4S FSIC will only be allowed provided that its registration as an RSC(V) being continued and that its "Authorized Signatory"* required under the registration with Buildings Department has not changed.

* Authorized Signatory of RSC(V) is the applicant refers to in para. 2 of the letter of 13.12.1999 from the Director of Buildings

to all registered Specialist Contractors (Ref. BD GR/RC/13 III) which reads as follows:

“Where an applicant is a sole proprietor, the Building Authority will assume that the applicant will act for himself for the purposes of the Buildings Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as the “authorized signatory”). Where the applicant is a partnership, the Building Authority will expect that at least one of the partners will act as the “authorized signatory” for the applicant. Where an applicant is a body corporate, there should be at least one person appointed as the “authorized signatory” for the company.”

- 5.3.5 **Under the above proposal, works on VAC system will only be allowed to be certified by FSIC.**

5.4 Registered Electrical Worker (REW)

- 5.4.1 IFE suggested that the acceptable grade of REW for different classes of FSIC should be spelt out. Among all types of REW under the Electricity Ordinance, only Grade R REW is only entitled to carry out work on a specified type of electrical equipment. Therefore, Grade R REW is considered not suitable for our purpose. As such, the following is suggested :

Suggestion : It is suggested that the registration requirement for an Electrical Worker registered under the Electricity Ordinance be modified as “Electrical Worker (except Grade R) registered under the Electricity Ordinance”.

- 5.4.2 Electrical and Mechanical Services Department was consulted on this proposal and they had no objection to it. However, they pointed out that Grade R(Generating Facility) REW was eligible to handle FS emergency generator. Although Grade R REW will not be accepted as a qualification of FSIC, the new registration scheme will not preclude a Class 1(b) FSIC to employ a Grade R(GF) REW to handle FS emergency generator.

5.5 The submission of Form 314/501 under the new FSIC classification

system

Architectural Services Department indicated that the existing arrangement in the submission of Form 314/501 after the new registration scheme is put into effect has to be sorted out as it is likely that there will be two or even more FSI contractors of different classes involved in the construction of new building. This could be sorted out internally by FSD in consultation with other relevant parties.

5.6 Competence of RSC(V) in handling staircase pressurization and smoke extraction system

Buildings Department indicated that as the competence of an RSC(V) in handling staircase pressurization and smoke extraction had not been tested under Buildings Ordinance, they suggested that RSC(V) should be assessed, say by interview, on these aspects to assure their quality for inclusion as Class 4 FSIC. The observation of the Buildings Department is agreed and knowledge on those installations which exceeds the scope of an RSC(V) will be assessed by interview during their registration with FSD as Class 4 FSIC.

6. Transitional Arrangement to the New Classification Scheme

6.1 In conducting the review, the Working Group is mindful of the interests of the existing FSIC to minimize the impacts. In order to ensure smooth transition, the following transitional arrangement is proposed:

6.1.1 Grace Period

Suggestion : A grace period of three years is proposed for the existing FSIC to continue with their business before the new Scheme is implemented. However, existing FSIC will have to acquire the revised qualifications, either by acquiring them personally or by employing new employees possessing such qualifications, unless the requirements set out in 6.2 are fulfilled. For continuation of business after expiry of the grace period, existing FSIC have to register as an appropriate class of FSIC under the new classification scheme.