



本處檔號 OUR REF.: (43) in FSD FSC GR 13-314/07 IV  
來函檔號 YOUR REF.:  
圖文傳真 FAX: 852-2312 0376  
電話 TEL. NO.: 852-2170 9595  
電子郵件 E-MAIL: fschq@hkfsd.gov.hk

21 March 2019

To: Recipients of FSD Circular Letters

Dear Sirs/Madams,

**FSD Circular Letter No. 2/2019**  
**Fire Safety Requirements for Waivers for**  
**Buffer Floor and Lower Floors of an Existing Industrial Building**

This Circular Letter aims to stipulate the fire safety requirements of the Fire Services Department (FSD) specified in the Practice Note Issue No. 3/2019 “Application for Waivers for Buffer Floor and Lower Floors of an Existing Industrial Building” issued by the Lands Administration Office, Lands Department.

2. By adopting buffer floor of non-hazardous occupancy to completely separate the upper industrial portion, a maximum of the lowest three floors of an existing industrial building can be converted to non-industrial uses. Application of this buffer floor concept in an existing industrial building is contained in TPB PG-No. 22D “Town Planning Board Guidelines for Development within ‘Other Specified Uses (Business)’ Zone”, TPB PG-No. 25D “Town Planning Board Guidelines for Use/Development within ‘Industrial’ Zone”, Master Schedule of Notes for ‘Industrial’, ‘Other Specified Uses’ and ‘Residential (Group E)’ issued by the Town Planning Board.

3. In addition to non-hazardous occupancy such as a car-parking floor, an electrical and mechanical plant floor and a refuge floor, Lands Department’s Practice Note Issue No. 3/2019 announces the extension of the use of buffer floor to cover ‘telecommunications exchange centre’ and ‘computer/data processing centre’ subject to, among other conditions, FSD’s fire safety requirements which are stipulated below:


3.1 The buffer floor and the industrial portion above shall be completely separated from the non-industrial portion below with construction having the prescribed fire resisting rating for industrial building that ingress/egress between the two portions is not permitted. In this connection, independent means of escape, means of access, entrance lobbies, staircases, passenger and cargo lifts, loading/unloading areas, etc. shall be provided.

- 3.2 The buffer floor shall be an independent floor constructed having the prescribed fire resisting rating for industrial building and provided with means of escape and means of access. For the avoidance of doubt, voids above false ceiling and below raised floor are not regarded as a buffer floor.
- 3.3 If there is/are basement(s) in the industrial building, it/they cannot be converted to non-industrial uses and it/they can only be used for non-hazardous occupancy such as carpark or/and electrical and mechanical plant room. Any industrial related activity or process including loading/unloading for the industrial portion in the basement(s) is not permitted.
- 3.4 The occupancy factor (i.e. usable floor area in m<sup>2</sup> per person) of the 'telecommunications exchange centre or 'computer/data processing centre' shall be 30 or more. For example, if the usable floor area of a telecommunications exchange centre is 300 m<sup>2</sup>, it shall not be occupied by more than 10 persons.
- 3.5 Any alteration and addition works shall be submitted for formal approval under the centralised processing system administered by the Buildings Department.
- 3.6 Fire service installations and equipment shall be provided for the alteration and addition works in accordance with the prevailing "Code of Practice for Minimum Fire Service Installations and Equipment".
- 3.7 Any other fire safety requirement as may be required specific to the case.

4. For the sake of clarity, except paragraph 3.4, the above fire safety requirements, shall also be applicable if the buffer floor is proposed for other non-hazardous occupancy such as car-parking floor, electrical and mechanical plant floor or refuge floor as far as the application for partial conversion of the lower portion of an industrial building for non-industrial uses is concerned.

5. For enquiries, please contact Senior Divisional Officer (New Projects) at 3971 4600.

Yours faithfully,



(TSANG Wing-hung)  
for Director of Fire Services

c.c. AD(LC)  
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