

**MEMO**

From Secretary for Development
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Date 17 March 2025

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Construction Site Safety Manual**Adoption of Metal Scaffolds in Public Works**

Scaffolds are widely used in building construction, building façade and wall repairs, and other types of civil, electrical and mechanical engineering works. Common types of scaffolds materials in Hong Kong are bamboo or metal, or a mix of both.

2. Albeit bamboo scaffolds have the advantages of being flexible, efficient and economical, they have their intrinsic weaknesses such as variation in mechanical properties, deterioration over time and high combustibility, etc., giving rise to safety concerns. Metal scaffolds are comparatively rigid, durable and with better access, platform, and walkway attributed to the use of standard components.

3. In public works contracts, metal scaffolds are extensively utilized in civil, electrical and mechanical engineering works, while bamboo scaffolds are traditionally used in building works. Metal scaffolds have been widely adopted in the construction industry in the Mainland and other advanced economies in the world. Therefore, stakeholders in the construction industry drive for a wider adoption of metal scaffolds in a progressive manner.

Policy

4. Taking cognizance of the advantages of metal scaffolds and the practice of the Mainland and advanced economies in the world, we will drive a wider adoption of metal scaffolds in public building works progressively.

5. Particular Specification ("PS") clause for adopting metal scaffolds in public works contracts is enclosed at **Annex A**.

Effect on Public Works Contracts

6. ArchSD shall select at least 50% of building capital works contracts for adopting metal scaffolds. It is also encouraged to adopt metal scaffolds in public works building maintenance contracts as far as possible. All capital works contracts, except those selected by ArchSD or depicted in paragraph 7 below for not adopting metal scaffolds, with tenders to be **invited on or after 21 March 2025** shall incorporate the PS clause at Annex A.

7. During the tender preparation stage, if there are grounds such as insurmountable site constraints or specific needs and circumstances of the contract, etc. that make the use of metal scaffolds not feasible or necessitate updates to the PS clause, approval from an officer at D2 rank or above shall be sought.

8. During the construction stage, if there insurmountable issues arise up which hinder the use of metal scaffolds in the contract, the Contractor shall seek approval from the Architect / Engineer for the Contract on the alternative proposal, pursuant to the provisions in the PS clause at Annex A.

9. The content of this memo will be incorporated into the Construction Site Safety Manual in its next updating exercise.

10. Please bring this memo to the attention of the project officers who are responsible for the preparation of tenders for public works contracts and the project officers, consultants and resident site staff supervising public works contracts.

Enquiries

11. Any enquiries on the above should be addressed to Mr LEE Man-yiu, Assistant Secretary (Works Policies 5) 5 at 3509 8305.

(Terence T M LAM)
for Secretary for Development

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Particular Specification for Adopting Metal Scaffolds

- (a) Metal scaffolds should be used for construction of any part arising from or in connection with the Works. In the event that special circumstances arise which hinder the Contractor not able to use metal scaffolds for construction of any part arising from or in connection with the Works, the Contractor shall provide a proposal for seeking approval from the #Architect / Engineer for the Contract to use scaffold(s) of materials other than metal. The aforementioned proposal should detail the genuine difficulties encountered with detailed justifications and proposed location, extent, details for using scaffold(s) of materials other than metal and the associated safety precautionary measures. For the avoidance of doubt, the Employer shall not at any time be liable for the loss or damage due to changes of scaffolds materials.

Note:

Amend as appropriate to suit the contract.