Chapter 2
WATER POLLUTION

Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO)

2.1 The WPCO requires anyone who discharges an effluent into a Water Control Zone (WCZ), except domestic sewage that is discharged into a communal foul sewer, to have a licence from the Environmental Protection Department (EPD). In setting licence conditions, the EPD follows a set of effluent standards in a Technical Memorandum (TM). The TM sets out the limits that make effluents acceptable for discharge into foul sewers, storm water drains, inland and coastal waters. Tables 1 and 2 of the TM on standards for effluents discharged into foul sewers connected to Government sewage treatment plants are at Appendix C. The actual standards to be complied with depend on the area in which the discharge is made and whether the discharge is to a foul sewer or to surface water. The EPD is responsible for the enforcement of licence conditions.

2.2 The Water Pollution Control (Sewerage) Regulation empowers the EPD to require owners of premises to connect their discharge to communal sewers. It also provides for controls in respect of the operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment facilities.

Water Control Zones (WCZs)

2.3 Under the WPCO, Hong Kong waters are divided into the following WCZs:

1. Tolo Harbour and Channel
2. Southern
3. Port Shelter
4. Junk Bay
5. Deep Bay
6. Mirs Bay
7. North Western
8. Western Buffer
9. Eastern Buffer
P1. Victoria Harbour (Phase One)
P2. Victoria Harbour (Phase Two)
P3. Victoria Harbour (Phase Three)
1SI*. Tolo Harbour Supplementary
2SI*. Southern Supplementary
2SII# Second Southern Supplementary
7SI# North Western Supplementary

* Amendments have been made to the Tolo Harbour and Channel WCZ and the Southern WCZ, creating the Tolo Harbour Supplementary WCZ and Southern Supplementary WCZ under these two original WCZs.
# The Second Southern Supplementary WCZ and the North Western Supplementary WCZ were introduced in September 1999 to cover areas of waters that have become part of Hong Kong since 1 July 1997.

A plan showing the WCZs is at Appendix D.

**Licensing Conditions**

2.4 Effluents from industrial and manufacturing activities are subject to control, and a valid licence is required for each effluent discharge. The licence contains terms and conditions specifying requirements of the effluent discharge, e.g. the discharge location, quantity and quality of the effluent, sampling points and any monitoring that is required to be carried out by the discharger.

2.5 Application for a licence should be made to the EPD. The applicant shall either be the effluent discharger or the person who authorises the discharge of the effluent, or the owner or occupant of the premises from which the effluent discharge is made. Licences are normally valid for five years and can be renewed.

2.6 The EPD normally requires the licensee to undertake regular monitoring of the discharge and submit analysis results to the EPD. However, the EPD may take samples itself, and has the authority to enter premises and take independent samples for confirmatory analysis. If one of these samples fails to meet the standard, the licensee may be prosecuted.

2.7 For enquiries, please contact the Local Control Offices of the EPD listed at Appendix E or the EPD Headquarters:

Environmental Protection Department Headquarters
28/F, Southorn Centre
130 Hennessy Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

☎: 2835 1018
Email: enquiry@epd.gov.hk
Homepage: http://www.gov.hk/epd

**Offences**

2.8 It is an offence to discharge wastes or polluting matters in a WCZ without a valid licence, or to discharge them in breach of the terms and conditions specified in the licence. The maximum penalty is $200,000 and imprisonment for six months for the first offence and $400,000 and imprisonment for six months for any subsequent offence. For a continuing offence, an additional penalty of $10,000 per day
may be imposed. It is also an offence to discharge any poisonous or noxious matters into a communal sewer or communal drain and the waters of Hong Kong. The maximum penalty is $400,000 and imprisonment for one year for the first offence and $1,000,000 and imprisonment for two years for any subsequent offence. If the offence is a continuing one, an additional penalty of $40,000 for each day may be imposed.

Charges for Sewage Services

2.9 In line with the Polluter Pays Principle, charges are levied on water consumers discharging wastewater into the public sewerage system according to the Sewage Services Ordinance. Sewage charges contain two components: Sewage Charge (SC) and Trade Effluent Surcharge (TES). SC at a prescribed rate of $1.2 per cubic metre of water consumed, other than that for flushing purposes, is levied on all water account holders whose premises are connected to a public sewerage. For a trade, business and manufacture listed in the Schedule to the Sewage Services (Sewage Charge) Regulation (copy at Appendix F), the amount charged is equal to 70% of the volume of water supplied, other than water supplied specifically for flushing purposes, multiplied by $1.2 per cubic metre.

2.10 TES is levied on trades and industries which produce effluents with a strength higher than that of domestic sewage. The pollution level is indicated by the Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) values assessed on different types of effluents. TES rates based on COD values for different trades, businesses or manufactures are listed in Schedule 1 to the Sewage Services (Trade Effluent Surcharge) Regulation. Schedule 2 to the Regulation specifies the COD values for different trades, businesses or manufactures. For a trade, business or manufacture listed in Schedule 3, the amount of surcharge is equal to 80% of the volume of potable metered water supplied, other than that for flushing purposes. Schedules 1, 2 and 3 to the Sewage Services (Trade Effluent Surcharge) Regulation are at Appendix F.

2.11 The Sewage Services (Trade Effluent Surcharge) Regulation provides that a consumer may apply for assessment of the COD values of his discharge. This can be done by engaging a laboratory approved by the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (HOKLAS) to obtain and test samples of an effluent collected at his premises in accordance with specific procedures stipulated in the Technical Memorandum of Procedures and Methods for Sampling and Analysis of Trade Effluents, and submitting the results to the Drainage Services Department for consideration. A list of HOKLAS-accredited laboratories approved for COD testing is at Appendix G.

2.12 Enquiries and appeals on matters relating to the charges for sewage services can be made to the Drainage Services Department at:

8/F, Guardian House
32 Oi Kwan Road
Wan Chai
Hong Kong
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Other Statutory Controls

2.13 Appendix H tabulates ordinances and regulations on water pollution control affecting manufacturing industries.