

STAR Metro Info Base

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Discrepancies in the system
Industry experts weigh in on the Certificate of Completion and Compliance

By CHOONG MEK ZHIN mekzhin@thestar.com.my

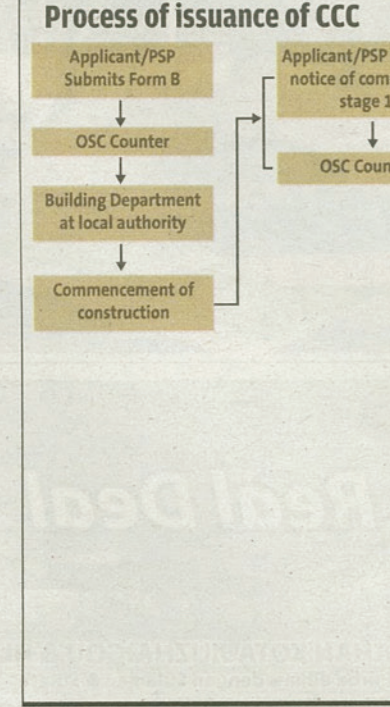
DESPIKE being in effect for the last six years, the Certificate of Completion and Compliance (CCC), which has replaced the Certificate of Fitness for Occupation (CF), is still a murky issue to many.

The biggest difference between the two is in the move towards self-regulation in the new system. Now the power to issue a CCC is with the professionals in charge of the project as opposed to the CF, which was issued by the local authority.

Each form addresses a specific parts of the project including earthworks, foundation, internal water plumbing, fire safety, sewage, road and drains, street lighting and landscaping.

These forms are also signed by the contractors including the electrician or plumber and where necessary, attached with supporting documents issued by bodies such as Tenaga Nasional Bhd and the Fire and Rescue Department.

In a CCC, these professionals are called the Principal Submitting Person (PSP) and they can either be an architect, building draughtsman or engineer registered with their relevant professional regulatory bodies as governed by the Architects Act 1967 or Registration of Engineers Act 1967.



Forms to fill: Although the CCC is being implemented to bypass red tape, industry experts still find it a lengthy process.

called the Principal Submitting Person (PSP) and they can either be an architect, building draughtsman or engineer registered with their relevant professional regulatory bodies as governed by the Architects Act 1967 or Registration of Engineers Act 1967.

Is there real change? One of the main reasons for the certification change is to cut red tape and delays, which is the bane of most property buyers.

Most until today, such complaints remain common. National House Buyers Association (HBA) honorary secretary-general Chang Kim Loong said many were unfamiliar with the new system.

ity to another. "In some cases, the local authority still need to 'approve' submitted forms before the PSP can issue the CCC. This contravenes the spirit of the new system," he said.

Chang added that there had been complaints of some local authorities wanting to conduct a physical inspection of the building before accepting the CCC.

This could cause a delay in the issuance of the CCC, resulting in public confusion, especially when buyers were told by the PSP that the local authorities had the last say.

lies with the PSP. This new system is merely a different way of doing things and involves more forms," he said.

He added that the CCC pushed PSPs to look into the inspection parts of projects and ultimately, it was better for the public to have a professional ensuring everything was done according to the law.

PAM has received complaints of PSPs signing the forms without inspection. "If you have signed the forms, you are taking responsibility for it," he said, adding that the CCC forms were very specific and pinpoints the person responsible for each segment of the project.

According to the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association of

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Malaysia president Datuk Seri Michael K.C Yam, the system allowed building owners to move in as quickly as possible without compromising their safety.

"There are many ways delay can occur including the local authorities imposing additional conditions at the time of CF application. "In the CCC, once technical aspects are complied with and without apparent threat to health and safety issues, the certificate can be issued," he said.

Through CCC, Vacant Possession is issued together and this overcomes the common problem in the past whereby homebuyers would receive their house keys but cannot move in as the CF had not been issued.

"The introduction of the matrix of responsibility in the Form Gs also leads to the improvement of work quality," he added.

Taking responsibility Saifuddin said the CCC had opened up a can of worms on what actually takes place in the construction industry.

"Whenever the Board of Architects, which regulate architects and building draughtsman, receives a complaint, the secretariat will get both sides of the story.

"Then a board member looks into the case and comes up with the recommended action that is brought to the inquiry committee," he said, adding that the process was according to the Architects Act.

In some cases, the problem was caused by agreements gone sour or PSPs who have not been paid properly, as such there was no straightforward solution.

The majority of complaints, however, were on shoddy workmanship, especially in housing projects.

"The PSP does not come into the picture unless he or she did not provide proper supervision. Matters involving the Sales and Purchase Agreement (S&P) is between the developer and purchaser," said Saifuddin.

He added that they had even blacklisted PSPs.

"We have to look into the impact their actions have on public health and safety. We also will consider whether it is a first-time offence," Saifuddin said, adding that once registered as a professional, the onus was on them to act professionally.

Chang concurred there would always be errant practitioners who would spoil an otherwise well-devised system.

Yam said with responsible owners, work quality and safety were priority and in the event of failure or flaws, action can be taken against responsible parties.

"In the capital for instance, Kuala Lumpur has taken steps to circumvent problems with the launch of the integrity pact where developers sign an MoU with City Hall to ensure all obligations in the Development Order is dutifully complied with," he said.

Role of the local authority Despite the final say being in the hands of the PSP, the local authorities still play a vital role. "The project is based on the plans and build-



Ensuring safety: The role of the local authority is important before housebuyers can receive their house keys. — filepic

CCC forms detail approval for each segment of a building

approval given by the local authority. Any amendments are also needed to be approved by them," explained Saifuddin.

He added that there was nothing to stop the authorities from visiting the site and there were provisions for them to take action.

"In any profession there are black sheep and PSPs who do not do their work properly. "This needs to be reported. But a small group should not tarnish the entire profession," he said.

Ampang Jaya Municipal Council Building and Architecture Department director Yazid Sarkom said when there was a deviation from the approved plans, a report to the Board would be made.

"Usually it is possible to tell after a visual inspection if any building has not been done according to the plan.

"It is the gross alterations such as adding an additional floor that becomes a safety issue," said Yazid.

He added that that cases reported in Ampang were usually small and did not involve large projects.

The way forward When a PSP signs the Form G, they take responsibility for that portion of the project until their passing.

Saifuddin said there was a need to look into the liability of a PSP such as limiting the number of years they were being held responsible.

"In the course of time, many things could happen to affect the building including the weather.

"Sometimes when something happens, it may not necessarily be the PSP's fault," he said, adding that many were quick to blame the architect.

Saifuddin said the construction of a building was a team effort and it was important to look into each problem to determine the right cause and who was responsible.

"In big projects, buildings are done in phases. Some contracts have components of a building designed and built by the contractor. These are the details that the public are usually not aware of," he said.

He said Malaysia lacked enforcement in many aspects.

"Sometimes when incidents happen, the ugly truth comes out that the construction works have not been approved by the local authority and no PSP was appointed.

"This makes us wonder sometimes how sure are we that the signage we commonly see outside construction sites are genuine?" he queried.

By law, all construction work needed the approval of the local authority.

Saifuddin said when it came to renovations, many were done illegally and could pose a safety hazard.

Chang said the system could be improved with the inclusion of an independent third

The present system takes up too much time and there is still a lot of red tape and a possible long legal process while housebuyers suffer.

- CHANG KIM LOONG



Metro Watch

BUILD YOUR WORLD Share your story by joining Lego's "Build Your World" competition. The competition will be held daily until June 9, 11am-8pm, at the concourse area, ground floor, Bangsar Village II. Registration forms are at the information counters in Bangsar Village and Bangsar Village II. For details, call 012-339 2433 (Joo Khim).

DIETARY THERAPY Traditional Chinese Medicine centre is holding seminars every Friday at 16, Jalan Othman, Section 1, Petaling Jaya from 7.30pm to 9pm. The topic this Friday is "Dietary therapy for diabetic patients," delivered by Lai Yeat Sean. The talk will be in Mandarin. Admission is free. For details call 03-7781 0843.

PARENT'S GUIDE A talk titled "Sex and Teen - A Parent's Guide" will be presented by Pastor Victor Wong on June 15, 9am-noon at Sunway Mas Community Centre, Jalan PJU 1/3G, Petaling Jaya. Refreshments will be served. To register, email smcc.community@gmail.com or call 012-707 2095.

COMMUNITY CARNIVAL Residents are invited to join Subang Jaya Municipal Council's community carnival and gotong-royong this Sunday, 8am-2pm, at Pangsia Perdana (Block A-G), Jalan Perdana 4/1, Taman Puchong Perdana. Gloves, garbage bags and brooms will be provided.

FOLK ART The "Art of Minhwa" will feature works of traditional Korean folk art by 15 artists. It is on display at the Malaysian Tourist Information centre, Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur until June 29. Admission is free.

Advertisement for Father's Day at Hartamas Shopping Centre. Features a banner that says 'f a t h e r ' s d a y' and a photo of a man. Text includes: 'My Dad My Superhero', '6-16 June 2013', and 'FREE 10-minute family portrait session & framed photo'.

Footer information including Executive Editor BRIAN MARTIN, Deputy Editors EDIE CHUA and SAM CHEONG, Assistant Editors ALIUSIES FRANCIS, V.P. SUJATA, PATRICK FONG, ESTHER CHANDRAN, SMIRIT KAUR, METRO EDITORIAL contact info, and ADVERTISING contact info.