

FACTSHEET ON WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH (DESIGN FOR SAFETY) REGULATIONS

Background

Design for Safety (DfS) is the process of identifying and reducing safety and health risks through good design at the conceptual and planning phases of a project. The Workplace Safety and Health (DfS) Regulations will be gazetted by August 2015 and will come into effect one year later to allow the industry sufficient time to comply with the Regulations. It was announced by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Tharman Shanmugaratnam during the National Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Campaign in May 2014.

Objectives

2 Developers, as owners and financiers of the project, have significant influence over the design of a building or structure, its safe planning and constructability, as well as the overall project management, including the contract duration and key specifications. Designers also play a critical role when they design the building or structure as the design could possibly create downstream risks to those constructing and maintaining the building.

3 The current WSH legislation does not place responsibilities on those who procure and design construction projects to ensure that they are safe to build and maintain. Hence, the WSH (DfS) Regulations aim to:

- a) Place responsibility for the safety and health of workers in the construction industry on those who create the risks;
- b) Achieve sustained WSH improvements through better coordination amongst the industry to manage the WSH risks upstream at the design and planning phase; and
- c) Improve the planning and effective management of safety and health risks throughout the entire lifecycle of a construction project, i.e. the design, construction, and maintenance stages of the completed building.

Key Provisions

5 The key provisions of the proposed WSH (DfS) Regulations are as follows:

a) To place duties on developers and designers

The Regulations will place duties on developers and designers to identify and address foreseeable risks throughout the lifecycle of a construction project. Where risks cannot be mitigated by design interventions, they will have to be communicated to those involved in the construction project.

b) To require implementation of a DfS review process throughout every phase of the construction project

The implementation of a DfS review process throughout every phase of the construction project or whenever design changes are made would ensure that risks in the design are highlighted and managed in a systematic and coordinated way. By doing so, time and resources can be allocated to help address the WSH risks at the design and planning stage.

c) To require a DfS register for all construction projects

Proper record keeping of WSH risk for future reference via a DfS register will be required to ensure that vital information are documented. The DfS register will record safety and health issues identified during the design reviews, the actions taken and the risks that cannot be removed through design changes. The DfS register should be a live document which will be updated promptly when WSH risks are identified. Key information from the register should also be communicated to all workers and employees.

d) To allow developers to appoint a person competent to perform delegated duties

Developers have the option to discharge their duties such as the facilitation of the DfS review process and preparation of a DfS register to a competent person. As developers are responsible for the risks that they create, they would have to make sure that they appoint a person who is competent and monitor that the assigned duties are carried out with due diligence.

e) To mandate DfS for projects with contract value of \$10 million and above

Projects with contract value of \$10 million and above are required to comply with the Regulations. Over the last two years, about 80% of fatal accidents and dangerous occurrences in the construction industry were contributed by projects with contract value of \$10 million and above.