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## Voluntary Building Assessment Scheme

Having a safe and hygienic living environment is the common aspiration of the community. However, with the passage of time, the buildings will deteriorate and cause different problems. On the contrary, through regular inspections and repairs, owners can identify potential problems in their buildings as early as possible and take remedial actions timely.

In view of this, the Buildings Department (BD) has implemented the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme (MBIS) and the Mandatory Window Inspection Scheme (MWIS) since 2012. Statutory notices are served to the owners of selected target buildings requiring them to carry out prescribed inspections and repairs.

On the other hand, owners are always encouraged to voluntarily inspect and repair their buildings. In this connection, the Hong Kong Housing Society has in parallel launched the Voluntary Building Assessment Scheme (VBAS) as an alternative to the aforesaid mandatory schemes. VBAS aims to encourage building owners to properly manage and maintain their buildings on their own initiatives.

VBAS has entered its tenth year. Therefore, this article is prepared to review the details and advantages of VBAS and also update the latest information of the scheme.

### Benefits of participating in Voluntary Building Assessment Scheme

- **Will not be selected as a target building**  
After joining VBAS, buildings will no longer be selected as target buildings by BD. Therefore, MBIS and MWIS (windows in common parts only) statutory notices will not be served.
- **Good preparation and planning for building inspection and repair**  
Owners can prepare their building inspection and repair with less pressure as the receipt of unforeseen MBIS and MWIS (windows in common parts) statutory notices is shunned. Meanwhile, it can also get rid of the negative impact on the property value because of the registration of statutory notices in the Land Registry.
- **Enhance building safety, management system and property image**  
Through proactive inspection and repair, the buildings can be maintained in a safe condition. At the same

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time, by assessing the building management system, owners can identify the areas for attention and make appropriate follow-up actions.

- **Compliance with MBIS and MWIS (windows in common parts only)**

Buildings certified under the VBAS will be recognised by the Building Authority for having fulfilled the MBIS and MWIS (windows in common parts only) within the respective inspection cycles.

### VBAS Target Buildings

All private domestic buildings and composite buildings (domestic and commercial) with quality building management are welcome to join. Three scenarios are available: -

| Scenario 1   | Scenario 1A  | Scenario 2  |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings without MBIS &amp; MWIS (for windows in common parts only) Statutory Notices</li> <li>• Assessment of both <b>Building Safety Category</b> and <b>Building Management Category</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings which have already received MBIS &amp; MWIS (for windows in common parts only) Statutory Notices</li> <li>• Join the VBAS within 2 months from the date of the Statutory Notices</li> <li>• Assessment of both <b>Building Safety Category</b> and <b>Building Management Category</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings already completed MBIS &amp; MWIS (for windows in common parts only) inspections and repairs and received Compliance Letters for MBIS &amp; MWIS (for windows in common parts only) / Acknowledgement Letters for Voluntary Building and Window (for windows in common parts only) Inspection issued by Building Authority</li> <li>• Assessment of the <b>Building Management Category</b> only.</li> </ul> |

Figure 1: Different Scenarios of VBAS

### Scope of Building Certification

In general, the scope of building certification shall cover all buildings and common parts in the Deed of Mutual Covenant (DMC) / Occupation Permit (in the case of single-ownership). Subject to actual needs, owners can join VBAS through "Single Application" or "Phased Application".

#### "Single Application"

Small-scale estates may participate in a single application for carrying out building assessment to the whole estate at the same time.

### “Phased Application”

The repair works in large scale estates are often more complicated. It is normal that more resources, effort and time are required. As such, apart from “Single Application”, large scale estate can participate by “Phased Application”. Under “Phased Application”, the assessment can be divided into several phases.

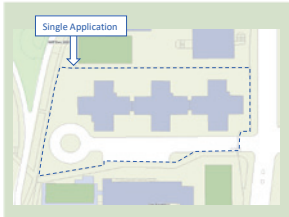


Figure 2: Single Application

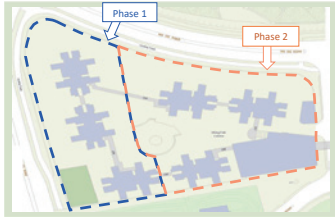


Figure 3: Phased Application

### Assessment items

The assessment items of VBAS involve 2 categories, namely “Building Safety Category” and “Building Management Category”. The “Building Safety Category” is totally on par with the requirements of MBIS and MWIS (windows in common parts only). Under “Building Management Category”, the existing building management system shall be evaluated in accordance with the standards devised by VBAS.

### VBAS Assessor

The assessment shall be carried out by the VBAS Assessors. The register of VBAS Assessors has been established since the launch of the scheme to include the professionals who are able and willing to undertake the assessment. There are three lists of VBAS Assessors, namely List 1, List 2A and List 2B. VBAS Assessors in different lists can conduct assessment to different elements.

All along, being the professionals specialized in Building Management and Maintenance, registered professional surveyors (RPS) have actively participated in the register and offer a helping hand to the building owners.

Being one of the recognised professionals, after taking a 1-day training session, RPS can register as VBAS Assessors in accordance with their respective disciplines as follows:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>VBAS Assessor (List 1)</b><br>(Eligible to assess both “Building Safety Category” and “Building Management Category” total 10 elements) | Registered Inspector (RI)<br><i>(RPS in Building Surveying Division / Quantity Surveying Division is one of the recognised Prescribed Qualifications for inclusion in the RI register)</i> |
|--|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>VBAS Assessor (List 2A)</b><br>(Eligible to assess Elements 7-10 under the Building Management Category) | RPS in Building Surveying Division<br>RPS in Quantity Surveying Division           |
| <b>VBAS Assessor (List 2B)</b><br>(Eligible to assess Elements 8-10 under Building Management Category)     | RPS in Property & Facility Management Division<br>RPS in General Practice Division |

Figure 4: Different RPS qualifications as VBAS Assessors

### Certificate and Quality Label(s)

Upon successful completion of building assessment, the buildings will be awarded different certificates and label(s) based on their assessment results.

### Fees for joining VBAS

Application fee and certification fee will be collected for participating in VBAS. The application fee is \$500 while the certification fee depends on the scale of the buildings. Currently, for property with 100 domestic units or below, the certification fees for Scenario 1 (incl. 1A) and Scenario 2 are \$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively. Meanwhile, buildings with 101 domestic units or more can still enjoy an exemption of certification fee. On the other hand, the fee for appointing the VBAS Assessor(s) shall be paid by the owners directly which is merely the deal between the owners and the VBAS Assessors.

### Recent enhancement measure

To keep abreast with the time, we continue to review and refine the implementation details to suit the actual needs. Since 2021:-

- **Solely owned building blocks in mixed development to join VBAS**

In the past, if a multi-ownership development wished to participate in VBAS, the scope of building certification must include all the parts within the DMC. However, in some developments, there are certain building blocks solely owned by a single owner while the others have been sold to individual owners. As such, the VBAS requirements regarding the scope of certification for such kind of developments have been revised. Since 2021, for mixed development in which some individual building blocks are solely owned by a single owner while others are sold to individual owners, the solely-owned building block(s) and parts can join VBAS independently.

For further details of the VBAS, please visit (<http://vbas.hkhs.com>) or contact via 8108 0108 / [vbasenquiry@hkhs.com](mailto:vbasenquiry@hkhs.com).