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For enquiry, please contact:  
Building Resilience Group (#10-01)  
Tel: 1800 342 5222 (1800-DIAL-BCA)  
or use our Online Feedback Form at:  
<https://www2.bca.gov.sg/feedback/>

To: Building Owners, Architects, Engineers, Builders and Facility Managers

## **ADVISORY ON SAFE INSTALLATION, INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF SUSPENDED CEILING SYSTEMS**

### **Objective**

This advisory sets out good practices for building owners and industry professionals in the selection, installation, testing, inspection and maintenance of anchorage systems and suspended ceiling systems. Recent incidents involving suspended ceiling collapses have highlighted the critical importance of ensuring that anchorage systems are fit for purpose and capable of safely supporting suspended ceiling loads throughout their service life. Regular inspection and maintenance also play an important role in safeguarding building occupants and the public.

### **Background**

2. Investigations into recent suspended ceiling collapse incidents have identified the use of anchorage systems with inadequate load carrying capacity for the intended application as a key contributing factor. In particular, some incidents involved the use of plastic anchors, which generally have lower load capacities than steel anchors and may not be suitable for certain sustained overhead loading applications. These incidents underscore the importance of selecting appropriate anchorage systems, ensuring proper installation and testing, and carrying out regular inspections and maintenance to safeguard building occupants and the public.

### **Good Practices for Design, Installation, Inspection and Maintenance of Suspended Ceiling Systems**

3. As a building owner, you are responsible for the safety of your premises and your occupants. You should therefore take proactive steps to ensure the integrity of your suspended ceiling systems, particularly at the connections between the ceiling frame and supporting substrate, and ensure that the systems are properly maintained throughout their service life.

4. In view of the recent suspended ceiling collapse incidents, as a building owner, you are encouraged to review your existing suspended ceiling systems, particularly older installations where the type, condition or load capacity of the anchors may not be known. Where the suitability of the anchorage system cannot be readily verified, you should engage a Professional Engineer to assess the installation and recommend any necessary rectification measures.

#### Design and Installation of Suspended Ceiling Systems

a) **[Design & Selection]** Anchorage systems used to secure suspended ceiling systems shall be suitable for the intended application and capable of safely supporting the imposed loads throughout their service life. Professional Engineers and Building Owners should be aware that plastic anchors generally have lower load capacities than steel anchors and may not be suitable for certain suspended ceiling applications, particularly where sustained overhead loading is involved. Appropriate anchors should therefore be selected based on design requirements, manufacturer's specifications and relevant standards.

b) **[Procurement & Supply]** Appropriate anchorage and fixing systems, including corrosion-resistant anchors where necessary, shall be procured from reliable manufacturers or suppliers, prescribed by a Professional Engineer where required. A copy of the method statement and manufacturer's specifications, together with endorsement by a Professional Engineer where applicable, should be retained on record.

c) **[Installation]** Installations should be executed by suitably trained installers in accordance with the method statement and manufacturer's specification endorsed by a Professional Engineer where required. Installers should adhere to these approved documents during execution.

d) **[Testing]** Once the anchors are installed, they shall, where required, be subjected to appropriate testing to verify their load performance.

e) **[Post-Installation Changes]** Any additional loads introduced after initial installation, such as air-conditioning ducts, lighting fixtures, fans, mechanical equipment or signage, shall be assessed to confirm that the existing structure and anchorage system can safely accommodate them. Such additions should not be made without proper assessment by a Professional Engineer.

#### Duty of the Building Owner to Maintain and Inspect the Suspended Ceiling Systems

f) **[Condition Evaluation]** Encouraged to carry out a review of your existing suspended ceiling support systems, to ascertain the type and condition of anchors

supporting the ceiling system. Particular attention should be paid to older installations where the suitability of the anchorage system may not be known.

g) **[Inspection Frequency]** Routinely carry out inspections, or get your appointed Facility Managers to inspect, with increasing frequency for ageing ceiling systems.

h) **[Inspection Focus]** Inspect where possible, the supporting frames of suspended ceilings through access panels. Particular attention should be paid to the anchorage points connecting the suspended ceiling system to the slab above. These connections should remain secure and free from signs of deterioration, distress or separation.

i) **[Sign of Defects]** Promptly highlight to your Professional Engineer any defects, loosening, corrosion or signs of distress such as sagging observed, for the Professional Engineer to propose the appropriate method of rectification.

j) **[Investigation of Defects]** Promptly engage your Professional Engineer to investigate and address the root cause of any defects that are present. Common defects observed include spalling concrete, water seepage, corrosion and improper installation of suspended ceiling systems.

k) **[Technical Reference Guide]** You can refer your inspectors to utilise BCA's *Good Practice Guide for Design, Installation and Maintenance of Building Fixtures for additional guidance and inspection checklists*.

## Reference Documents

5. Building and Construction Authority (BCA) has published the *Good Practice Guide for Design, Installation and Maintenance of Building Fixtures (March 2022)*, which covers suspended ceilings, air-conditioning and mechanical ventilation fixtures, mechanical, electrical and plumbing fixtures, overhead fixtures and spalling concrete. Building owners, architects, Professional Engineers, builders, facility managers and other industry professionals are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with this guide, including its maintenance checklists, to aid in the early identification of deterioration and potential failure.

## **Responsibility of Building Owners, Architects, Engineers, Builders and Facility Managers**

6. As a building owner, you are responsible for ensuring that your premises remain safe for occupants and the public at all times. You should engage competent Architects, Professional Engineers, builders, contractors and facility managers, where appropriate, to properly design, supervise, install, inspect and maintain the suspended ceiling systems and their supporting anchorage systems. However, the engagement of professionals does not by itself discharge your responsibility.

7. Architects, engineers, builders, contractors and facility managers should exercise due care and professional diligence in carrying out their respective roles and responsibilities. Proper design, selection of suitable anchorage systems, supervision of installation works, proactive inspections and timely rectification of defects are essential in preventing avoidable incidents.

8. As a building owner, you should also maintain appropriate records of design, installation, inspection and maintenance activities, including any assessments, testing and rectification works carried out on your suspended ceiling systems. Maintaining proper records supports timely identification of deterioration or defects, and demonstrates that proper care has been taken in the management of your premises.

## **Enquiry for Clarifications**

9. Please bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all relevant parties and members. Should you need further clarifications, please submit your enquiry through BCA's Online Feedback Form at <https://www2.bca.gov.sg/feedback/> or call us at 1800 342 5222.

Yours faithfully,



**PUNITHAN SHANMUGAM**  
**DIRECTOR**  
**ENFORCEMENT AND STRUCTURAL INSPECTION DEPARTMENT**  
**BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY**  
for COMMISSIONER OF BUILDING CONTROL

## **Annex A – Reference Publications on Design, Installation and Maintenance of Suspended Ceilings**

**1 MAR 2022: GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR DESIGN, INSTALLATION AND  
MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING FIXTURES**