

## Tackling Water Seepage Problem- Regional Joint Offices

**Super :** Tackling Water Seepage Problem  
Regional Joint Offices

**Super :** Occupant  
Owner  
Joint Office Staff

**Voice-over :** Water seepage in buildings is generally caused by defective building fabric or installations  
Managing and repairing the building properly including resolving seepage problems are the responsibilities of the owners and occupants

**Voice-over :** Where necessary owners or occupants may seek help from the Joint Office (JO) set up by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Buildings Department for investigation of water seepage reports

**Super :** Hong Kong Regional Joint Office  
Kowloon Regional Joint Office  
New Territories West Regional Joint Office  
New Territories East Regional Joint Office

**Voice-over :** There are a total of four Regional Joint Offices under the JO which is responsible for dealing with reports of water seepage in buildings  
With statutory power and professional expertise the JO tries to identify the source of water seepage through non-destructive tests and requires the party concerned to carry out repairs so as to resolve the water seepage problems

**Super :** Investigation Procedures  
Confirmation of Water Seepage Condition  
Initial Investigation  
Professional Investigation

**Voice-over :** Water seepage investigation by the JO will be conducted in three stages  
Stage 1: Confirmation of water seepage condition  
Stage 2: Initial investigation  
Stage 3: Professional investigation

**Super :** Investigation Procedures

## Stage 1 Investigation

### Confirmation of Water Seepage Condition

**Voice-over :** Upon receipt of a water seepage report  
JO staff will first contact the informant  
and arrange for inspections to the affected premises  
At this stage,  
JO staff will use a moisture meter  
to monitor the moisture content of the seepage area  
The informant is required to remove all obstructions (e.g. false ceiling)  
at the seepage area to facilitate investigation

**Super :** Moisture Content of  
Seepage Area  $\geq 35\%$   
+  
Water Seepage Problem Suspected  
to Have Been Caused  
by Another Premises  
↓  
Arrange for the Subsequent Stages  
of Investigation

**Voice-over :** If the moisture content of the seepage area is found to be 35% or above  
and the seepage problem is suspected to have been caused by another premises  
the JO will proceed to the subsequent stages of investigation

**Super :** Investigation Procedures  
Stage 2 Investigation  
Initial Investigation

**Voice-over :** At Stage 2 investigation  
JO staff will, depending on the circumstances and needs of the case  
conduct one or more tests  
including moisture content monitoring  
and colour water test, etc.

JO staff will perform colour water tests  
at the drainage pipes in the suspected premises  
First, colour dye is diluted with water and poured into the drainage outlets

It will then be discharged via the drainage pipes

Then, JO staff will further check the seepage area  
at the informant's premises to see if there is any sign of colour water  
The colour dyes used are biodegradable and organic.  
They are safe to the environment and human health

**Super :** Investigation Procedures

Stage 3 Investigation

Professional Investigation

**Super :** Stage 3 Investigation

Moisture Content Monitoring

Ponding Test for Floor

Spray Test for Wall

**Voice-over :** At Stage 3 of investigation

the JO will engage a consultant to conduct one or more tests  
including moisture content monitoring  
ponding test for floor  
and spray test for wall, etc.

Before conducting ponding test for floor  
Or spray test for wall at the suspected premises  
the consultant's staff will first cover the drainage outlets  
then perform colour water tests at areas such as the floor slab of bathroom  
the walls and floor of the shower compartment, etc.

**Super :** **Stage 3 Investigation**

Occupant

Staff of JO's Consultant

**Voice-over :** Afterwards, the staff will go to the informant's premises

to check if there is any sign of colour water at the seepage area

**Super :** Stage 3 Investigation

Infrared Thermography

Microwave Tomography

**Voice-over :** In certain cases, the JO will make use of new technologies

e.g. infrared thermography and microwave tomography

during the stage of professional investigation to identify the source of seepage

**Super :**

Statutory Power

Public Health

and Municipal Services Ordinance

(Cap. 132).

**Voice-over :**

The Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132)

confers statutory power on the JO

to handle water seepage situation that causes sanitary nuisance

**Super :**

Statutory Power

Occupant

JO Staff

Owner

**Voice-over :**

When handling a water seepage report

we need the co-operation of the relevant parties

so that the investigation officer can enter the premises

to conduct tests and collect evidence

If the investigation officer is denied entry to the premises concerned

during the course of investigation

the JO may apply to the Court for a warrant

to enter the premises for investigation and tests

**Voice-over :**

If the investigation officer confirms that the source of water seepage

has posed a sanitary nuisance

the JO will act in accordance with the aforesaid Ordinance

**Super :**

Nuisance Notice

**Voice-over**

The person concerned will be issued with a Nuisance Notice

requiring the abatement of nuisance within a specified period of time

failing which the person may be subject to prosecution

**Super :**

Source of Water Seepage

Not Identified

**Voice-over**

If there is no substantive evidence to prove any contravention of the law

the JO cannot take any action under the aforesaid Ordinance.

**Super :**

Circumstances under which

the Public Health  
and Municipal Services Ordinance  
Not Invoked

**Super :** Public Health  
and Municipal Services Ordinance

**Voice-over :** We have to understand that not all water seepage cases  
will be handled under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance

**Super :** Public Rental Housing  
Housing Department

**Voice-over :** If the premises concerned is a Public Rental Housing (PRH) unit  
the JO will refer the case to the Housing Department for action

**Super :** Units under the Rental Estate of the Hong Kong Housing Society  
Hong Kong Housing Society

**Voice-over :** If the premises concerned is a unit under rental estate of the Hong Kong Housing Society  
the JO will refer the case to the Hong Kong Housing Society for action

**Super :** Defective Water Supply Pipes  
Water Supplies Department

**Voice-over :** If water supply pipes are found to be defective which cause wastage of supply  
the case will be referred to the Water Supplies Department for action

**Super :** Circumstances under which the  
Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance  
Is Not Applicable

**Voice-over :** Under normal circumstances  
seepage caused by penetration of rainwater through roofs, flat roofs  
balconies, external walls or windows of a building  
will not have any public health implications  
The JO cannot take action against such cases under the Public Health and Municipal Services  
Ordinance

However, the owner may approach the Owners' Corporation  
or the property management officers  
to delineate the responsibilities of the parties concerned  
identify the source of seepage and arrange for repairs

**Voice-over :** Apart from the intervention of government departments  
co-operation of owners and occupants is the most important

for resolving water seepage problems

Resolving water seepage problems helps build a happier living environment!