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PAM

**PERTUBUHAN AKITEK MALAYSIA
MALAYSIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

**FIRE FIGHTING REQUIREMENTS FOR
SERVICED APARTMENT/SOHO**

PAM Practice Notes

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NOTES TO MEMBERS

Fire Fighting Requirements for SOHOs

We refer to the *Jabatan Bomba & Penyelamat Malaysia* (JBPM) circular [ref: JBPM/IP/BKK-700-1/1/1 Jld. 3(1)] dated 31 Dec 2021 which was circulated to members. In the circular, JBPM categorised Serviced Apartments as either a **Stand-Alone Development** or a **Mixed Development**.

JBPM informed that Fire Fighting provisions for Serviced Apartments or “*Small Office, Home Office Units*” (SOHO) undertaken as a Stand-Alone Development may follow residential requirements if:

- a. the local authority consents that it will only be used for residential purposes;
- b. the Sale & Purchase Agreement (SPA) for these Apartments/Units specifically states that the unit shall only ever be used for residential purposes;
- c. the design of the serviced apartment interior resembles a residential unit-with bedrooms, kitchen, etc.; and
- d. the height of the building containing the Serviced Apartments/SOHOs does not exceed 120 m or 40 storeys.

We would like to caution members that the name ‘SOHO’ gives the impression that it is a ‘small office’ and ‘home office’, thus, purchasers who bought the units may have the intention to operate it as offices. The Developer will not be able to guarantee that the SOHOs that they are working on, are able to meet the above requirements during the lifespan of the building; therefore, we would advise that the firefighting provisions for these Stand Alone, SOHO or Serviced Apartments comply with the requirements for that of a commercial building. Members are advised that commercial requirements should be catered for in their design, lest they become parties to a civil action suit for only providing residential, firefighting provisions in a commercial building. Kindly note that currently, most local authorities define Serviced Apartments to be in the commercial category.

Fire requirements are part of the Uniform Building By-Laws [UBBL] and its provisions have to be complied with. However, members should note that in the UBBL, the standards of protection against hazards to health, safety and fire risk are only **minimum** standards and that the Principal Submitting Person (PSP) who designs the fire-fighting provisions, also assumes full responsibility, especially in the event of failure. Members as such, as advised to consider appropriate (rather than minimum) standards when carrying out their design work.

Members are also advised to double-check if there is any conflict with other Acts, Regulations or By-Laws as blindly complying with the circulars of JBPM may not stand as a sound defence in the Courts of Law.

Prepared by:
PAM Professional Practice Committee
5 April 2022