



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to Editor

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Housing Ministry must stop Fire Department compelling use of SPKA system

The fire department is lamenting that there are some designated buildings operating with expired Fire Certificates. Is this because they have not changed to the SPKA system monopolized by one company through a questionable “open tender”?

Over the last two (2) years the fire department had sent out letters threatening designated premise holders that if they do not switch over to the automatic Fire Alarm Monitoring System provided by iScada Net, i.e. the SPKA System, they would not get their Fire Certificates (FC). The Department is still sending out such letters which some designated building owners find intimidating as they have the CMS System running in good order and the Ministry has not made any ruling yet on the issue of the Monopoly by iScada Net.

This matter was brought up in Parliament last year and the Minister’s response was that the Ministry would look into the monopoly given to iScada Net to provide the system.

So when the Fire Department says that “owners must comply with the rules or face the law”, does it mean that those using the CMS System will face the law because the Department has now given the monopoly to iScada Net and its SPKA system, although their already installed CSM Systems are in perfect operational condition?

If the Ministry is yet to decide on the issue of the monopoly, the least it should do in the interim is to stop the Fire Department issuing intimidating letters to the designated building owners.

The Ministry should also look into the SPKA System itself which is touted by iScada Net as being superior to the CMS System, while those using the CMS System claim that the CMS System is better as there is no time delay in the signal reaching the fire stations.

Our own research supports the claim that the CMS system is better as there is no human intervention between the triggering of the alarm and the signal reaching the fire stations, while in the SPKA system there is human intervention and delay of up to two minutes at least.

Further the so-called “open tender” itself should be investigated as the circumstances around it are questionable as the Fire Department had been secretly working with iScada Net Sdn. Bhd. for a few years to develop the SPKA before the “open tender”.

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