



# Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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**Letter to the Editor**

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## **DANGEROUS HIGH-RISK BUILDINGS**

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is concerned with the news that roughly half of the 8638 high-risk buildings in our country have failed to get the Fire Certification (FC) issued by the Fire and Rescue Department.

Four months ago there was an incident at the EPF building at Jalan Gasing, Petaling Jaya where a fire that started was able to spread rapidly due to the exterior cladding that was made of non-fire retardant material.

To us the revelation about the materials used was not only frightening but also embarrassing, considering this is a government building that had gone against the specifications laid out by the Fire and Rescue Department.

After the incident CAP had called on the authorities to conduct mandatory checks of all high-rise buildings across the country to ensure that safety specifications have been complied with.

Recently a news article reported that the Fire and Rescue Department has determined that more than 4,000 buildings in the nation do not have these traits: a fire-suppression system, a fire safety management team, and a building structure that conforms to fire-safety specification (resulting in a need to renovate); but the Department is not taking immediate action against these building owners unless they are in "critical" conditions.

It was also reported that once a building has obtained the FC, the building owner will renovate the building to the point that it is no longer fire-safety specification compliant.

The news article shows that people in general are still not treating the issue of fire safety as seriously as they should.

CAP calls on the Fire and Rescue Department to take immediate action against all high-risk buildings that are not following fire-safety specification (even if the fire-safety specification checklist is lengthy and are not deemed to be in "critical" condition); and to make it mandatory that high-risk buildings must be inspected by the Fire and Rescue Department after every renovation even if they already have the FC. The Fire and Rescue Department should also carry out random spot-checks on old buildings.

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