

Owners must ensure buildings have safety features in place

Architects and fire safety experts to host seminar on cladding fire incidents on March 13

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BUILDING owners play the biggest role in preventing fire at their premises, said Institution of Fire Engineers (UK) Malaysia branch vice-president Tay Hao Giang. "Building materials used in renovations matter.

"Some cladding are flammable and others are not. When the flammable type is used, the fire spreads quickly and the whole building catches fire in minutes," he said.

To address issues and discuss the latest ideas on fire safety, the Malaysian Institute of Architects will host a seminar on March 13.

Among the speakers will be Tay, Malaysian Institute of Architects president Ezumi Harzani Ismail and its council member Adrianta Aziz.

"You can insure your building by taking insurance but you cannot replace loss of life. A fire also leads to the loss of business opportunities.

"It is the responsibility of building owners to ensure their buildings have all the safety features in place and renovations are done upon consultation with experts.

"Some thick doors are meant to prevent fire from spreading fast to another room. Doors at the stairways must be kept closed to avoid fire from spreading fast to other floors," he said in a press conference to announce the seminar.

On Feb 13, the Employees Provident Fund building in Petaling Jaya caught fire, engulfing about 40% of the six-storey building. It was reported that the cladding panels used on the exterior of the building in Jalan



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Ezumi Harzani says with better understanding by building owners deaths could be prevented.

Gasing caught fire.

Adrianta said there were moral responsibilities to be undertaken by building end users to ensure their buildings were safe at all times.

"We have to design safer buildings. A building can look good, but if it is not maintained or is renovated with flammable materials it can be a fire hazard," he said.

Ezumi said there would be more line-up of seminars and workshops on fire and safety topics organised by the Malaysian Institute of Architects on April 7, Aug 18, Sept 22 and 23.

"We want to carry out more seminars on this topic of building fire safety because we feel strongly about this topic. With better understanding by building owners, we can prevent deaths," he said.

The "Cladding Fire Incidents – What Went Wrong" seminar and workshop welcomes developers, building owners, students as well as industry experts.

The event is RM550 for Malaysian Institute of Architects members and RM450 for non-members.

For details, call Nurul at 03-2202 2866 or Goh at 03-9101 2255.