

COMMENT ON FIRE LOAD DENSITIES

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On perusing the recent paper on fire loads in buildings by Fong and Chow [1], I thought of a point which is not only relevant in terms of its intrinsic scientific content but, perhaps, doubly relevant to a paper about Hong Kong in a journal itself based in Hong Kong. Fong and Chow state:

It is observed that shops in Hong Kong have higher values of the fire load density. This is because shops in Hong Kong are packed with goods. Shop owners and storekeepers have to pile up stocks as land price is too high.

In the late 1990s, there was concern that retail outlets at the then new Hong Kong airport had fire loads which were too high. A major concern was that if such an outlet set on fire, there would be flashover to the entire terminal building. The second named author of [1] and the author of this note were both involved in the literature debate on the matter [2,3]. Interested readers can examine [2] and [3] and related papers such as [4] for themselves. It is sufficient to reiterate the conclusion in [3] that an outlet as small as 3 m by 3 m would, if having ignited it attained a temperature of about 600°C, release heat at a rate sufficient to cause flashover to the terminal hall. I have no doubt that Prof. Chow will appreciate this link between his most recent work and his work from over a decade ago with which it has an obvious overlap of theme. Readers of [1] might like to add [2], [3] and [4] to their 'reading lists'.

REFERENCES

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4. M. Law and P. Beever, "On the cabins fire safety design concept in the new Hong Kong airport terminal building", *Journal of Fire Sciences*, Vol. 16, pp. 149-158 (1998).