ABSTRACT

The issue of safety will always surface in our daily lives. Some of the examples include safety at homes and at workplaces, traffic safety, construction safety and a safe community. In the property sector, there is always a strong emphasis on safety at construction sites. However, the situation in the property management field is very different.

The concern for the safety of buildings was highlighted following the collapse of the Hotel New World. The tragedy raised the question of adequate safety standards in property management, and resulted in the enactment of the Building Control Act in May 1989, designed to ensure that buildings are structurally safe. Is the Act the panacea to all the safety problems in the built environment?

The property management functions commence upon the successful commissioning of a newly constructed building. The author's review of past literature on the property industry, suggests that there is little research on the safety aspects of property and maintenance management. This has necessitated the current study which attempts to evaluate whether present safety standards are adequate.

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The safety issues that are analysed are fire safety, structural safety, quality of indoor air and noise nuisance. These topics are singled out as they directly concern the lives and health of the building occupants. The objective of the dissertation is to test the validity of the hypothesis "That existing policies and practices on the safety aspects of property and maintenance management, are inadequate".

The hypothesis is tested via a thorough review of the relevant legislation, assessment of operational problems and an evaluation of current practice. The analysis, clearly demonstrates that current safety standards are inadequate; confirming the hypothesis.

In order to improve safety, a number of improvements are suggested. These include legislative controls, quality assurance, retrofitting, community education and awareness, planned maintenance programmes, training and research and development work.