



Building Newsflash

BUILDING APPROVALS – FIRE SAFETY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES IN BUDGET ACCOMMODATION BUILDINGS

Purpose

The purpose of this Building Newsflash is to outline the process for assessing, approving and documenting fire safety management procedures in budget accommodation buildings (BABs). The process ensures –

- Fire safety management procedures are adequately assessed and recorded;
- Future owners will be aware of the building’s fire safety management procedures;
- Building certifiers fulfil their professional responsibilities; and
- Applicants are able to exercise appeal rights.

Background

A joint inspection program of pre-1992 BABs, involving council and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Officers, is underway. Owners, councils and other stakeholders need to be aware of the full range of compliance options as well as the processes that must be followed to achieve compliance.

Fire safety management procedures may be used as cost-effective alternatives that satisfy the performance requirements of the applicable building code in some instances. These procedures are managed activities and solutions that may, or may not, involve structural work.

Assessment managers may assess and approve fire safety management procedures with advice from the QFRS. In pre-1992 buildings, most procedures are used to manage minor issues. Examples include extended travel distances from non-sleeping areas such as external balconies, doors swinging inwards in buildings with low occupancy levels, or corridors with narrow sections.

Procedures may assist owners of pre-1992 buildings, which must comply with the *Fire Safety Standard*, to attain compliance in situations where the cost of altering the building fabric would be out of proportion to the intended safety benefit.

Legislation

Building Act 1975

Section 3 (1) (see the *Schedule* and the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* s1.3.5) defines “building work”. Building work includes work regulated under the *Standard Building Regulation 1993*. Generally, all alternative solutions are considered to be “building work” and subject to development (building) approval unless otherwise exempted.

Section 12Q requires a copy of the building's proposed fire safety management plan to accompany all development approvals in BABs. Please note also that private certifiers may not assess development applications for works undertaken to comply with the *Fire Safety Standard*.

Standard Building Regulation 1993

Section 98 sets out the requirements for the preparation of a certificate of classification with respect to selected assessable development. Sections 98 (5) (c) & (d) stipulate that details of any restrictions on use and performance standards that form part of an alternative solution, must be included in the certificate.

Integrated Planning Regulation 1998

Schedule 2, Table 1 sets out the QFRS referral jurisdiction.

Interpretation

The normal Integrated Development Assessment System (IDAS) rules apply to the assessment of fire safety management procedures. However, assessment managers should use discretion to ensure that the drawings or plans that are required match the complexity of the assessment. Simple scale drawings may be acceptable for minor procedures.

In addition, in line with accepted practices, building certifiers may approve simple alternative solutions where the solution's justification can be clearly stated and the matter is within the certifier's level of competence. Assessment managers should ensure that a management procedure meets the relevant performance criterion and that justification of the performance standard is recorded. QFRS can provide advice on whether the procedure meets the requirements of the *Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990*. The procedure must be adequately reflected in the proposed fire safety management plan.

Once the procedure is approved a revised certificate of classification should be issued with the performance standards listed, any restrictions stated and a copy of the proposed fire safety management plan attached.

For further information see the Fire Safety Standard Guidelines, "Application of the Fire Safety Standard" and "Development Application Process" on www.lgp.qld.gov.au/firesafety or call 1800 682 021.

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