



Building newsflash number 460

Re-occupying buildings affected by flood

Purpose

To advise owners and occupants of the need to ensure their buildings are safe before re-occupation where fire safety installations have been affected due to flood damage.

Background

This newsflash is a joint Building Codes Queensland and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service publication.

Following the recent widespread flooding across Queensland there has been significant damage to buildings and in many cases fire safety installations may not be operative.

The Building Act 1975 (BA) requires buildings to continue to perform to the level of safety that was required when the building was constructed. Owners, and in some cases occupiers, are responsible for maintaining a building's fire safety installations.

Local Governments have extensive enforcement powers under the BA with regard to building safety generally.

Issues

Owners and occupiers should take steps to ascertain whether their building's fire safety installations have been damaged or affected by flood waters before allowing the building to be re-occupied. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service recommend delaying occupation until the building's fire safety installations are functioning correctly.

However, if re-occupation of a building is required before selected fire safety systems are fully operational, in emergency circumstances, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is now offering free advice on fire safety issues that may help in mitigating fire safety risks. Please notify Queensland Fire and Rescue Service via email fireris@dcs.qld.gov.au if a building is being occupied that has of the following fire safety installations affected by flood:

- sprinkler systems
- fire detection and alarm systems
- stairwell pressurisation systems.

A Queensland Fire and Rescue Service officer will then contact you to make a time to provide you with fire safety advice as soon as possible. Please provide your building's address, a contact person and telephone number.



Building occupiers may also need to amend their 'fire and evacuation procedures' to accommodate the temporary changes.

Certain high risk public activities should not be undertaken where fire safety installations are not fully operational, for example night clubs. In addition, owners or occupiers may need to take immediate steps to ensure occupants can be safely evacuated at all times such as in nursing homes or other buildings where safety is highly reliant on the effective ongoing performance of building fire safety systems. High occupation buildings such as boarding houses, backpackers and hotels should have operational smoke alarms and emergency lighting at all times.

Owners should monitor their site and where they have any concerns about land slippage or the structural safety of their building they should contact their Local Government for advice as soon as possible.

Contact for further information

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