



ADVISORY NOTE

MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

1.0 Purpose

This advisory note has been developed by the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service to inform building owners/occupiers of their legal obligations to maintain building fire safety measures and to confirm the requirements and expectations for undertaking and recording this activity.

2.0 The importance of maintenance

Building fire safety measures are required to be installed in buildings to achieve community safety expectations. Maintenance of building fire safety measures is fundamental to system and equipment performance and is necessary to ensure operational reliability and avoid or prevent system or equipment failure. Methods of maintenance include the activities of inspection, testing, verification, preventative maintenance, repair and rectification to ensure installed systems and equipment continue to fulfil their intended purpose. Routine maintenance is necessary to ensure systems and equipment perform as expected and support a safer community.

2.0 Legislative Provisions

Obligations for installation and maintenance of fire protection systems and equipment are prescribed in the;

- (i) Northern Territory Building Act; and
- (ii) Northern Territory Building Regulations; and
- (iii) Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Act; and
- (iv) Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Regulations.

This legislation can be accessed at www.dcm.nt.gov.au

2.1 The Building Act and Regulations

Section 52 of the Building Act makes provision for regulations to specify requirements for the installation of fire safety systems and equipment via adoption of codes, standards, rules, specifications or methods. Accordingly the Building Code of Australia and associated standards are adopted by the Building Regulations and prescribe installation requirements in the Northern Territory.

Section 50 of the Building Act allows for the Regulations made under the Act to provide for matters affecting the safety of existing or proposed buildings and may provide for:

- (i) Provision, installation, operation, maintenance and replacement of ventilation, lifts, emergency lighting, emergency power, emergency intercommunication systems, firefighting equipment and other emergency equipment and services
- (ii) Prevention of, and precautions against (and in the event of), life threatening emergencies
- (iii) Fire prevention and precautions

However, the Building Regulations do not currently include specific provisions for the maintenance of fire protection systems and equipment this is instead addressed by the Fire and Emergency Act and Regulations.

2.2 The Fire and Emergency Act and Regulations

Section 27A of the Fire and Emergency Act makes provision for prescribed buildings to be inspected regularly by the Director of the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service or an authorised person to ensure that:

- (i) the requirements of any law in force in the Territory; and
- (ii) the standards imposed by any Australian Standard as in force from time to time in relation to fire safety are met and continue to be met.

Schedule 2 of the Fire and Emergency Regulations (referenced by regulation 11(1AA)) defines what a prescribed building is (see appendix A). The list includes the majority of residential, commercial and industrial buildings where the nature of their use or intended use increases the life safety risk for the building's occupants.

Regulation 11(6)(a) of the Regulations requires the owner of a prescribed building to ensure that "fire alarms and other warning apparatus, exit lights, emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment are maintained in accordance with relevant standards".

3.0 Building Fire Safety Measures and Relevant Standards of Maintenance

In order to comply with Regulation 11(6) (a) of the Fire and Emergency Regulations, the owner of a prescribed building is responsible for maintaining a range of building fire safety measures to relevant standards. Table 1 (see page 4) prescribes the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Services' requirements for what individual building fire safety measures are to be maintained pursuant to Regulation 11(6) (a) and the relevant standard to which they are to be maintained.

Where prescribed buildings have been approved by the relevant authority subject to an alternative solution in accordance with the performance-based Building Code of Australia, maintenance of building fire safety measures in these buildings must be undertaken in accordance with any specific requirements of the alternative solution that formed part of the approval. Where maintenance requirements are not prescribed by the alternative solution or only partly prescribed, maintenance of building fire safety measures in accordance with Table 1 is required.

4.0 Maintenance Records and Yearly Condition Reports

Records of maintenance including logbooks or tags and labels with hard copy summary records must be kept by the building owner indicating that maintenance procedures have been carried out for all building fire safety measures installed in a prescribed building. These are to be available for inspection by the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service within 48 hours following request. Maintenance records must indicate:

- the building and its location,
- individual building fire safety measures installed,
- the date and frequency of maintenance undertaken
- the pass/fail criteria required by the relevant maintenance standard listed in Table 1.
- Details of any non-conformance, critical defect or non-critical defect
- The name of the building owner responsible for maintenance
- The name of the person who carried out maintenance

Where the relevant maintenance standard listed in Column 2 of Table 1 prescribes requirements for service records, compliance with the service record requirements in that standard is required to satisfy the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service.

Yearly condition reports summarising the service records of the year's maintenance activities are required by AS 1851-2012 to be provided by maintenance service providers to building owners each year. Yearly condition reports must contain details of outstanding defects and

non-conformances and should be provided for all building fire safety measures in the format described in AS 1851-2012.

5.0 Defect Reporting and Rectification

In accordance with the procedure outlined in AS 1851-2012, the following applies to all building fire safety measures installed in a building.

- The building owner will be identified of critical defects before the maintenance service provider leaves site, or where this cannot be achieved, as soon as possible. Written confirmation of a critical defect will be provided in 24 hours.
- Non-critical defects, non-conformances and out of tolerance activities will be communicated in writing by the maintenance service provider within one week.

The terms critical defect, non-critical defect, non-conformance and tolerance are to be applied as defined in AS 1851-2012.

It is the building owner's responsibility to rectify any defects. Critical defects should be rectified with the minimum of delay. Non-critical defects and non-conformances should be rectified or resolved as soon as practicable.

6.0 Competent Persons

It is important that maintenance of building fire safety measures is conducted by competent persons. Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service recognises that holding relevant nationally recognised units of competency from the Australian Qualification Framework is an appropriate way to demonstrate competence regarding the maintenance of building fire safety measures. The Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service also acknowledges that holding accreditation via the national Fire Protection Accreditation Scheme (FPAS) developed and administered by Fire Protection Association Australia demonstrates that individuals have obtained or are in the process of obtaining the relevant units of competency as outlined by FPAS and have relevant experience and insurance and are committed to a professional code of conduct. Visit www.fpaa.com.au for further details.

Building owners must ensure that the individuals undertaking maintenance of their buildings fire safety measures are competent.

7.0 References to Australian Standards

Any reference to an Australian Standard in this advisory note is a reference to the latest edition of that Standard including any amendments.

8.0 Enforcement Powers

Section 27A of the Fire and Emergency Services Act provides power for the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service to regularly inspect prescribed buildings to ensure standards are met.

9.0 Further Information

If you require further information regarding the requirements to maintain building fire safety measures Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service recommends consulting an appropriately qualified person specialising in building fire safety measures.

For further information regarding adoption and implementation of AS 1851-2012, visit Fire Protection Association Australia www.fpaa.com.au

Alternatively you can visit Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service at www.fire.nt.gov.au.

Table 1 – Maintenance of Building Fire Safety Measures

MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING FIRE SAFETY MEASURES	
Where a prescribed building pursuant to Schedule 2 of the Fire and Emergency Regulations has any of the Building Fire Safety Measures listed in column 1 installed, these Building Fire Safety Measures must be maintained to the Relevant Maintenance Standard listed in column 2.	
COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
Building Fire Safety Measure *Note 1	Relevant Maintenance Standard * Note 2
Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Fire Pumpsets	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Fire Hydrant Systems	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Water Storage Tanks for Fire Protection Systems	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Fire Detection and Alarm Systems	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Special Hazard Systems	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Delivery Layflat Fire Hose	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Fire Hose Reels	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Portable and Wheeled Fire Extinguishers	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Fire Blankets	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Passive Fire and Smoke Systems	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Fire and Smoke Control Features of Mechanical Services	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Emergency Planning in Facilities	As prescribed in AS 1851-2012
Emergency Lighting	As prescribed in AS/NZS 2293.2-1995
Illuminated Exit Signs	As prescribed in AS/NZS 2293.2-1995
Photo luminescent Exit Signs	Check monthly that signs are clean, not obstructed, have sufficient lighting levels to facilitate charging and are clearly visible to persons approaching the exit
Exits and Paths of Travel to Exits	Three monthly inspection of exits and paths of travel to exits to check their ongoing compliance no obstructions to egress
Solid Core Doors	Six monthly inspections of door and door hardware to check for damage or deterioration and to ensure correct operation of door, closer and latch
Fire Control Centres and Rooms	Annual inspection for ongoing compliance with construction and content requirements
Lifts providing a stretcher facility	Annual inspection to check stretcher facility available
Fire service controls in lifts (buildings over 12m in effective height)	Annual inspection to check activation and operation of fire service controls
Emergency and standby power systems	Six monthly inspection and test to confirm performance
Vehicular access for fire appliances	Ensure fire service appliance access at all times
Items prescribed in an Alternative Solution	As prescribed in the alternative solution approved by the relevant authority, or where this has not been prescribed in the alternative solution, in accordance with a relevant standard listed above
*Note 1 – The Building Fire Safety Measures listed in this table may incorporate multiple elements.	

For example passive fire and smoke systems incorporates, fire resistant doorsets, smoke doors, vertical and horizontal fire and smoke elements (walls, floors etc.). Refer to the relevant maintenance standard listed to identify all elements.

*Note 2 – Where AS 1851-2012 is referenced, compliance must be achieved with Section 1 of AS 1851-2012 and the relevant Section associated with the Building Fire Safety Measure

Appendix A

Northern Territory Fire and Emergency Regulation - Schedule 2 Prescribed buildings

Regulation 11

Buildings used for health care where the occupants undergo medical treatment and generally would need physical assistance to evacuate the building during an emergency, including:

- (a) public or private hospitals;
- (b) nursing homes or buildings used to accommodate sick or disabled persons needing full-time nursing care; and
- (c) medical clinics, day surgeries or procedure units where patients may require medical care for some time after treatment.

Buildings used as child care centres.

Buildings used as places of public entertainment.

Buildings used for educational purposes, including schools, educational colleges and universities.

Buildings where people may assemble including for civic, theatrical, social, political, religious, recreational or transit purposes.

Buildings used for long term or transient residential accommodation for unrelated persons, including:

- (a) boarding houses, guest houses, hostels, lodging-houses and back packers accommodation;
- (b) the residential parts of motels and hotels;
- (c) the residential parts of schools;
- (d) accommodation for the aged, disabled or children; and
- (e) the residential parts of buildings used for health care that accommodate medical staff.

Office buildings.

Shopping complexes, including super markets and large variety stores that incorporate smaller variety stores in the complex.

Buildings used as factories or warehouses, including buildings in which goods are manufactured, processed, produced, assembled, altered, packaged, finished, cleaned, stored or displayed.

Buildings used as fuel depots in which bulk fuels in tanks or packages are stored before distribution.

Buildings licensed under the *Liquor Act* for the sale of liquor for consumption on the buildings and where entertainment is provided, including bars, restaurants, discotheques and nightclubs.

Buildings used as laboratories, whether for commercial, industrial and educational purposes.