

Building Code Requirements Guide

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Introduction.

The Regulations require the building owner to maintain essential safety measures so that they operate satisfactorily. There are different obligations under the Regulations, which depend on when the building was built or when building work occurred on the building.

The two divisions in Part 15 of the Regulations refer to essential safety measure maintenance and exits and paths of travel maintenance respectively.

Buildings Built Before 1st July 1994

The Building Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) require that owners of buildings built prior to 1 July 1994 maintain the essential safety measures installed within the building. They must be maintained to a working condition that enables them to fulfil their purpose and meet the expectations of inspecting authorities. It is still expected that building owners will engage suitably qualified and competent persons to establish the essential safety measures and outline a level of maintenance.

In some instances this may be a difficult task and may involve detailed inspection and research of historical documentation to establish the essential safety measure and frequency and type of maintenance. Essential safety measures in this part means any measure required for the safety of persons using a building or place of public entertainment. It includes an item of equipment, form of construction or safety strategies.

Essential safety measures in a building constructed prior to 1 July 1994 could be, but are not limited to:-

- Fire extinguishers (portable)
- Exit doors
- Fire control panels
- Fire mains
- Fire doors
- Exit signs
- Emergency lighting
- Smoke doors

Buildings Built Between 1st July 1994 and 1st May 2004

The Building Regulations 2006 and Part 11 of the Building Regulations 1994 prescribed the requirements for maintenance of buildings built on and after 1 July 1994.

Any essential safety measure must be maintained, by the owner, to a working condition that enables them to fulfil their purpose and meet the expectations of inspecting authorities.

The Regulations make it mandatory for the building surveyor to list the required essential services on the issuing of the occupancy permit. The level of performance to which the service is to be maintained must also be specified on the occupancy permit.

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The Regulations list essential safety measures as:

Air conditioning systems	Fire mains
Emergency lifts	Fire-protective coverings
Emergency lighting	Fire-rated access panels
Emergency power supply	Fire-rated control joints
Emergency warning and intercommunication systems	Fire-rated materials applied to building element
Exit doors	Fire-resisting shafts
Exit signs	Fire-resisting structures
Fire brigade connections	Fire shutters
Fire control centres	Fire windows
Fire control panels	Lightweight construction
Fire curtain	Mechanical ventilation systems
Fire dampers	Paths of travel to exits
Fire detectors and alarm systems	Penetrations in fire-rated structures
Fire doors	Smoke alarms
Fire extinguishers (portable)	Smoke control measures
Fire hose reels	Smoke doors
Fire hydrants	Smoke vents
Fire indices for materials	Sprinkler systems
Fire-isolated lift shafts	Stairwell pressurization systems
Fire-isolated passageways	Static water storage
Fire-isolated ramps	Vehicular access for large isolated buildings
Fire-isolated stairs	Warning systems associated with lifts

Buildings Built from 1st May 2004

As part of the 2004 amendment to the Building Code of Australia (BCA) Volume 1, safety measures were defined and introduced a list of safety measures to be maintained.

The intent is to establish the minimum standard of performance that all safety measures in buildings must continually be able to achieve. Current safety measures are grouped as follows :

- Building fire integrity
- Signs
- Fire-fighting services and equipment
- Automatic fire detection and alarm systems
- Lifts
- Building clearance and fire appliances
- Building use and application
- Means of egress
- Lighting
- Air handling systems
- Occupant warning systems
- Standby power supply systems
- Other measures