

Fact Sheet

Building and Plumbing Amendment (Balcony Sprinkler Protection) Interim Regulations 2015

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this fact sheet is to inform practitioners of the modifications to the deemed-to-satisfy provisions of BCA Volume One made by the Building and Plumbing Amendment (Balcony Sprinkler Protection) Interim Regulations 2015 (the *Interim Regulations*).

2. BACKGROUND

The Interim Regulations commenced on 15 December 2015 and modified the deemed-to-satisfy provisions of BCA Volume One by—

- removing an exemption in AS 2118.1—1999 so that covered balconies in Class 2, 3, 4, 9a and 9c buildings must be sprinkler-protected regardless of size; and
- removing the paragraph in C1.10 that allows a building surveyor to determine the fire hazard properties of a material without testing that material.

3. COVERED BALCONY SPRINKLER PROTECTION

The Interim Regulations have modified the requirement to install sprinklers on covered balconies. The amendment applies to Class 2, 3, 4, 9a and 9c buildings where an AS 2118.1—1999 sprinkler system is to be installed and requires sprinkler-protection to be provided to all covered balconies, regardless of the size of the balcony.

When is a balcony a covered balcony?

The new sprinkler protection requirements apply only to *covered* balconies, including the covered part of a partly covered balcony.

Modification of AS 2118.1—1999

In BCA Volume One, clause 2 of deemed-to-satisfy Specification E1.5 adopts AS 2118.1—1999 for certain classes and heights of buildings.

For Class 2, 3, 4, 9a and 9c buildings, the Interim Regulations modify AS 2118.1—1999 so that Clause 5.6.13 now reads:

5.6.13 Covered balconies

Covered balconies shall be sprinkler-protected.

Class 2, 3, 4, 9a and 9c buildings that install an AS 2118.1—1999 sprinkler system under deemed-to-satisfy Specification E1.5 must now extend sprinkler-protection to covered balconies, regardless of size.

4. CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGE TO THE PLUMBING CODE OF AUSTRALIA

The Plumbing Code of Australia (*PCA*) has been modified to provide for consistency between AS 2118.1—1999, which is applied by the BCA; and AS 2118.1—2006, which is applied by the PCA.

The PCA currently applies AS 2118.1—2006 for the purposes of deemed-to-satisfy provision B4.2(c). For Class 2, 3, 4, 9a and 9c buildings, the Interim Regulations modify AS 2118.1—2006 so that Clause 5.7.10 now reads:

5.7.10 Covered balconies

Covered balconies shall be sprinkler-protected.

5. AMENDMENT TO C1.10 FIRE HAZARD PROPERTIES

The Interim Regulations modify deemed-to-satisfy provision C1.10—Fire hazard properties in BCA Volume One to remove the provision that allows that the use of a material does not significantly increase the hazards of fire, without that material being subjected to a performance based assessment.

Materials set out in deemed-to-satisfy provision C1.10(a) in BCA Volume One must now comply with specification C1.10, unless that material is otherwise exempted under deemed-to-satisfy provision C1.10 (c), accredited by the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, the Australian Building Codes Board, subjected to performance assessment as an alternative solution under the BCA, or the subject of a determination by the Building Appeals Board that allows its use in particular circumstances.

Deemed-to-satisfy provision C1.10 in BCA Volume One requires certain linings, materials and assemblies to meet specification C1.10 as follows—

C1.10 Fire hazard properties

- (a) The *fire hazard properties* of the following linings, materials and assemblies in a Class 2 to 9 building must comply with **Specification C1.10**:
- (i)

In BCA Volume One, paragraph (c) of deemed-to-satisfy provision C1.10 provides that the requirements of deemed-to-satisfy provision C1.10(a) do not apply to a material or assembly if it is specified in paragraph (c).

The Interim Regulations modify the application of DTS C1.10(c)(xiii) and DTS C1.10(c)(xiv) so that they now read:

- (c) The requirements of (a) do not apply to a material or assembly if it is—
- (xiii) an attached non-building fixture and fitting such as—
 - (A) a curtain, blind, or similar decor, other than a proscenium curtain *required by Specification H1.3*; and
 - (B) a whiteboard, *window* treatment or the like.
 - (xiv) *****.

6. USE OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

The BCA is a performance based code that allows compliance with the performance requirements either by adhering to the deemed-to-satisfy provisions, or by developing an alternative solution.

For further information on the operation of the performance based system, please refer to Practice Note 2013-29: Using Volumes One and Two of the National Construction Code Series.

If you have a technical enquiry please email: technicalenquiry@vba.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 815 127

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