

Building Practice Note ESM-04: Removing a fire hydrant hose from buildings built before 1991

This Practice Note provides guidance on the process required to remove a lay flat fire hydrant hose from BCA Class 2 to 9 buildings built before 8 April 1991.

The context below provides guidance for:

- Regulatory requirements
- Building permit requirements
- Dangerous goods

Abbreviations & Definitions

The abbreviations and definitions set out below are for guidance only. They are not intended to vary those set out in the Building Act 1993 (Act), Building Regulations 2018 (Regulations) or the National Construction Code (NCC).

- **Act** – Building Act 1993
- **AS** – Australian Standard
- **BAB** – Building Appeals Board
- **BCA** – Building Code of Australia (Volume One of the NCC)
- **CFA** – Country Fire Authority
- **DtS** – Deemed-to-Satisfy
- **FRV** – Fire Rescue Victoria
- **NCC** – National Construction Code
- **RBS** – Relevant Building Surveyor
- **Regulation** – regulation of the Building Regulations 2018 unless the context indicates otherwise
- **Section** – section of the Building Act 1993 unless the context indicates otherwise

Regulatory requirements

A building must be provided with fire-fighting equipment where required to safeguard against fire spread and to allow the fire brigade to fight a fire.

Before the adoption of the BCA 1990 on 8 April 1991 a fire hydrant installed in a Class 2 to 9 building was required to have a lay flat 38mm fire hydrant hose, with 12mm nozzle and appropriate fittings. Hydrants installed in buildings after the introduction of the BCA 1990 on 8 April 1990 are not required to be equipped with lay flat hoses.

Regulation 227 specifies that required essential safety measures must not be removed from approved locations. The penalty for non-compliance is 20 penalty units. In addition, further enforcement action may be taken under Part 8 of the Act.

The removal of required lay flat hose from a building may usually be approved by the issuing of a building permit, though there may be situations where equipped hydrants are required, e.g. as a decision associated with a regulation 129 report and consent or as a requirement under the Dangerous Goods Act 1985. Existing hydrants must be adapted as part of the building permit process so that they have fittings suitable for the attending fire brigade.

Building permit requirements

When assessing the removal of a required lay flat hose as part of an application for a building permit, the RBS must consider the following matters:

- Date of building construction, its use and location
- The type of fire hose coupling required to be fitted to enable the brigade to use their own hose will depend on whether the building is located in a CFA or FRV serviced area. Refer to Appendix E of AS 2419.1 for information about suitable couplings and contact the relevant fire brigade for confirmation
- Hydrant couplings and hose coverage must be in accordance with the DtS provisions of the BCA unless a report and consent is obtained under regulation 129 from the Chief Officer of the relevant fire brigade
- Whether report and consent under regulation 129 from the Chief Officer of the relevant fire brigade is necessary if there is non-compliance with other relevant DtS provisions of the BCA
- A relevant consent, refusal of consent or condition of a relevant authority under the Building Control Act 1981
- The adequacy of other fire-fighting facilities and equipment under Part 51 of the BCA, including provision for special hazards
- Any applicable BCA performance solution, including a fire engineering report
- Any regulation 233 or 234 statement of partial compliance issued
- Any section 160 or 160A determination from the BAA
- If dangerous goods are stored or handled on the premises, advise the applicant that they may need to notify, and get the written advice of, the emergency services authority under the Dangerous Goods Act 1985
- Issuing a maintenance determination, or including a maintenance condition on an occupancy permit, and preparing or updating a maintenance schedule if required. Refer to Practice Note 23 – Maintenance of Essential Safety Measures for further guidance

Signage

As part of the building permit process hydrant signage, including cabinets must be updated to reflect the absence of the hose at the hydrant, e.g., "FIRE HYDRANT AND HOSE" must be changed to "FIRE HYDRANT" in 50mm capital letters in accordance with AS 2419.1.

Dangerous goods

Chemical and industrial complexes handle and store quantities of dangerous goods. Equipped hydrants may be required by the relevant emergency services authority, under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012. In certain circumstances, those regulations require referral of fire protection matters relating to an occupancy with dangerous goods, to the emergency services authority.

A fire protection system, including required hydrant hose must not be altered, or removed from buildings with dangerous goods in excess of limits specified in those regulations, without a referral being made to, and written advice being obtained from, the emergency services authority. Contravention of this requirement may constitute an offence for the purposes of sections 45 and 45A of the Dangerous Goods Act 1985.

Related Documentation

- AS 2419.1—2005 Fire hydrant installations—System design, installation and commissioning
- Building Act 1993
- Building Regulations 2018
- CFA fittings: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/documents/20143/69511/FSG006-LUP-BMO-Water-Tank-Connections-Outlet-Pipe-Work-aug14.pdf/60cd506d-c469-eff6-1921-25b0544e2460>
- Dangerous Goods Act 1985: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/dangerous-goods-act-1985/105>
- Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012: <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/dangerous-goods-storage-and-handling-regulations-2012/007>
- FRV – Greater Melbourne Area map: https://www.frv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/FRV_GreaterMelb_LR.pdf

Version History

- Version 2.0, published 28 June 2021, supersedes Practice Note 31. Removing a lay flat fire hydrant hose from existing buildings before 1990

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