

Burning issues..

Welcome to the first edition of *Burning issues*, a newsletter to keep you up to date with the changes to the fire industry and how they affect the properties you manage. The newsletter is available to everyone and if you have information you'd like to have added, please contact me at geoff@sydneyfire.com.au. If you think the newsletter is useful to others, please forward it or request more copies.

Deadly fire extinguisher

Woman killed in fire extinguisher accident.

A freak accident at a truck and transport business in NZ claimed the life of a 32-year old woman, hit in the head by a flying fire extinguisher. The valve of the extinguisher was damaged when it was knocked over and the sudden discharge of high pressure CO2 gas sent the cylinder spinning, then flying. It punctured the lower leg of

an 54 year old man whilst on the ground, then flew into the air, hitting the woman in the head and smashing through a corrugated plastic window high on the wall.

The message is clear! Ensure that all fire extinguishers are wall mounted as required by Australian Standard 2444.



A correctly wall mounted fire extinguisher

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Special points of interest:

- Annual Fire Safety Statements.
- Latest changes to the Strata laws.
- Lessons learnt from fires in buildings.
- Changes to Maintenance Standards

Annual Fire Safety Statements

It is the owners corporation or their agents responsibility to provide an annual fire safety statement (AFSS) to the council whether it is requested or not. It's also a requirement to

submit the AFSS in on time. If it's the first time, testing should be commenced three month prior to the date of submission. This lead time will allow for rectification works to

occur. Council's are phasing out reminders and phasing in fines for late submission so start planning. Fines: \$500/1st week, \$1,000/2nd week,

Changes to AS1851 Maintenance Standard

AS1851, the Australian Standard for maintenance of essential (fire) services is in the final stages of revision and the word from Standards is that it will be released between July & September 2005.

While the exact changes are always unknown until published, the following changes have been mooted as occurring:

Sprinklers & fire pump testing changing from weekly to monthly (though considerably more stringent tests)

An additional level of testing- 'survey' to bridge the gap between testing and the annual fire safety statement.



Maintaining a hose reel to AS1851

annual tests will become more complex.

Initial calculations show little change to the annual cost of maintenance due to fewer inspection cost being swallowed up by the increase complexity of the testing.

The new code will mean buildings are more likely to comply

Latest changes to the Strata Laws

Owners corporations will soon be responsible for arranging access to all parts of the premises for the fire safety inspections (eg. Fire Doors, smoke alarms, fire rating, etc). Office of Fair Trading have stated that failure to conform may result in a penalty of up to \$2,200. Adjudicators will be able to issue orders

against those not providing access for inspections.

Original owners of strata schemes (developers) will be required to hand over additional documentation at the first AGM. These include:-Development consents, Compliance & Fire Safety Certificates, Occupation Certificates, Warranties & Ser-

vice Manuals & Sewerage Line Diagrams. The maximum penalty for not handing over the documentation has been increased from \$1,100 to \$11,000.

Failure to conform may result in a penalty of up to \$2,200.

AFSS (continued)

\$1,500/3rd week, \$2,000/4th week & \$2,000 every subsequent week. The AFSS should be issued in person to the council, a copy sent to The Commissioner of the NSW Fire Brigade and a copy placed in a prominent location on site (eg. Foyer)

Before a statement can be issued, all essential services (fire protection equipment) must be tested then assessed in accor-

dance with the Australian Standard to which it was designed & installed. This includes equipment such as mechanical air handling, emergency lifts & garbage chutes.

With the fines being significant it is important that everyone involved starts planning well in advance. There are companies who will provide a statement for \$80 a year. At 6-7 hours to in-

spect the simplest building, you can be sure of one thing- you will be in trouble if there's a fire! Plan ahead, use a reputable firm & hand deliver it!



Recording & testing equipment for the Annual Statement

It's criminal



Paraguay Supermarket.

Aug 2004, 364 people perished in a massive fire in a crowded supermarket. When people endeavored to escape, they found that exit doors had been locked and in one case welded shut. Firefighters found the main doors locked when they arrived to stop looters. In addition to the dead, 256 people were ad-

mitted to hospital.

Among the dead were entire families. It goes to show, we all have a duty of care to the occupants & visitors to our building. Where security concerns contradict fire safety concerns, there are better solutions than simply locking doors. Magnetic door releases are one such example.

Horrific Fires

Anyone who has to arrange for a building to be maintained and certified grumble at the process and paperwork generated.

When you look at some of the fires that have caused horrific casualties that affect peoples lives it makes it all worthwhile.

Whilst fire systems & maintenance is a pain and costly, it's much better than the alternatives.

MGM Grand Hotel Fire,

November 1980, 85 Guests were killed and 679 were injured. Fire Brigade requested sprinklers be installed during construction but the hotel had refused.

Dusseldorf Airport Terminal.

April 1996 3 fire fighters were killed and 62 injured. No sprinklers or alarms were installed.

Lessons learnt from fires in Buildings

The European Commission— Joint Research Centre— Italy recently held a workshop on catastrophic fires in all types of buildings and occupancies. It was established that appropriate legislation is the main measure for prevention of fires.

Consideration to codes should include passive fire protection, fire resistant construction, compartmentation and active fire protection and emergency lights. They stated that legislation should apply to all buildings not just new sites.

Australia has had this legislation for many years and for this reason, we have few catastrophic fires.



Spanish high rise raises questions about the lack of fire services.



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SYDNEY FIRE PROTECTION

NEWS:

We've restructured our operations area to ensure our customers are given one point of contact and the best customer service. Sydney has been divided into four areas to give you excellent local knowledge.

North Shore & North CBD

Operations Manager is **Tina Kirchner**. Tina has had many years experience in the building services industry. Tina can be contacted direct on 8594 3402

South Sydney, inner west & South CBD

Operations Manager is **Phil Brenton**. Phil has been involved in the building industry in Sydney for some years. Phil can be contacted direct on 8594 3403

Eastern Suburbs

Operations Manager is **George Reboredo**. George is very experienced & has been with Sydney Fire both as a technician and operations manager. George can be contacted on 8594 3406



Our customer service team!

Western Suburbs

Operations Manager is **Matt Mulligan**. Matt is experienced in facilities management and essential services. Matt can be contacted on 8594 3407.