

Building and Plumbing Newsflash 529

Referrals for interconnected smoke alarms in Class 1 buildings and sole occupancy units in Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings

Purpose

To advise of:

- proposed amendments to the *Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009* (SPR) to exclude interconnected smoke alarms installed in Class 1 buildings, and sole occupancy units within Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings from being referred to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES) for advice, and
- a process endorsed by QFES for any referrals required during the interim period until the proposed amendments take effect.

Background

Since 1 May 2014, the National Construction Code (NCC) has required multiple smoke alarms in Class 1 buildings and sole occupancy units within Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings to be interconnected.

Interconnected smoke alarms are listed as a 'special fire service' for the purposes of QFES referral jurisdiction under Part 2, Schedule 8, of the SPR. This means that any building development application that includes a 'special fire service' must be referred to the QFES for advice before a building development approval can be given.

An unintended consequence of the NCC amendments has been that all building development applications for new Class 1 buildings and sole occupancy units within Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings must now be referred to the QFES for advice.

Section 271 of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* provides the ability for a referral agency to provide a response on a matter within its jurisdiction before a building development application is made to an assessment manager.

Proposed amendment to the SPR

An urgent amendment to the SPR is proposed to address this unintended consequence. It is intended to amend Schedule 8, Part 2 of the SPR to exclude interconnected smoke alarms installed in Class 1 buildings and sole occupancy units in Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings from the list of 'special fire services'.

This will mean that building development applications for these types of buildings will no longer need to be referred to the QFES on the basis that they have interconnected smoke alarms.

The proposed amendments are intended to commence at the end of June 2014.

Please note: Building development applications involving interconnected smoke alarms in other classes of buildings will still need to be referred to the QFES.

QFES advice on referrals during the interim period

The QFES has provided generic [referral agency advice](#) regarding the installation of interconnected smoke alarms in Class 1 buildings and sole occupancy units in Class 2, 3 and 4 buildings. The QFES has also indicated that under section 271 of the SPA this advice can be considered to be the QFES' referral agency response for these installations only, until such time as the SPR is amended, and that these applications do not need to be referred to the QFES.

For further information about referrals to the QFES and this interim approach, please contact your local QFES Community Safety Regional Manager.

Contact for further information

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