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Certification Assessor Bulletin

C.H. Group Pty Ltd

Introduction

2005 was a very busy year with the implementation of the Certification contract, the small homes program and extensive private certification assessments and solutions reports, as the aged care industry faced the December 2005 deadline for compliance with the 1999 certification instrument.

As outlined by the Department of Health & Ageing at the Assessor Teleconference, many facilities did not achieve compliance

Stage 1 of the Department's Certification assessment review of these facilities has now commenced. C.H. Group are In the process of contacting the facilities that the Department have nominated for a review in Stage 1 to arrange an on site Certification Assessment.

This edition of CAB includes many of the technical issues discussed at the Assessor teleconference

Special points of interest:

- February Teleconference
- Farewell & Welcome
- Technical interpretation of BCA provisions

Inside this issue:

Fire Sprinklers

To achieve a full score for installation of fire sprinklers, a certificate of compliance must be sighted. Where sprinklers are required (Class 9c or any facility in Victoria), the system must comply with AS2118.4. Where sprinklers are not required, but installed, the system may comply with either AS2118.4 or the NFPA 13R standard (National Fire Protection Association, USA).

Fire Compartmentation

In Class 9C buildings, maximum fire compartment areas vary with the type of construction (BCA table C2.2):

- Type C: 3,000m^2
- Type B: 5,500m^2
- Type A: 8,000m^2

In Class 9A buildings, a maximum fire compartment area of 2,000m^2 applies, regardless of type of construction (BCA C2.5).

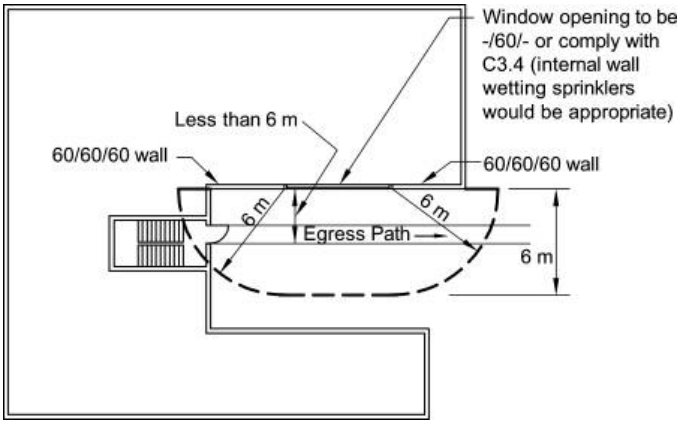
Load bearing walls in a sprinkler protected Class 3 building must have a FRL of 60/60/60, for all types of construction (not required in Victoria). (BCA Specification C1.1 Clause 2.9, Specification C1.1 Table 5.1).

Fire Compartmentation

In assessing fire compartmentation / separation, the fire rating of external walls which are adjacent to the discharge from fire isolated stairs, must be considered.

The diagram indicates a scenario where the discharge from the fire isolated stairs is within 6 metres of the building and windows.

The wall is to have a FRL of 60/60/60 from both directions and the window opening must be appropriately protected, for a full score for Q 1b)ii)' appropriate treatment'. (BCA D1.7)



Egress

Distance of Travel

In a small Class 3 building, only one exit may be required. In this case, distance of travel from the door of a sole occupancy unit, must not exceed 20 metres (Clause D1.4(a)(ii)).

But, where 2 or more exits are required or provided, the provision for 6 metres to a point of choice applies. (BCA D1.4)

Secure Area Compatibility

This question considers the interface between fire systems and provisions to secure residents (e.g. dementia wings). This can include external areas, where thee are enclosed garden areas or courtyards.

Where gates are provided for egress, automatic release on alarm is required.

External gate fitted with keypad & electronic strike with auto release.

Smoke Compartmentation

Fire Doors

Where fire doors have a dual role as smoke doors, they must be provided with smoke seals and smoke door signage.

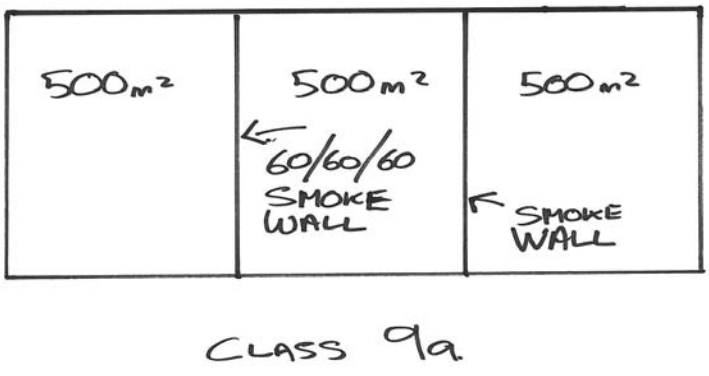
A 400mm deep smoke reservoir must be provided. (BCA Specification C3.4)

Smoke Wall FRL

The diagram illustrates where a smoke wall would require an FRL.

BCA Clause C2.5 for a Class 9A states that where fire compartmentation or fire separation is not required given the floor area of the building, then any smoke walls must have an FRL of not less than 60/60/60.

If the smoke wall is now required to have a fire rating, then in addition to smoke separation, this must also be considered in Section 1b Fire Compartmentation / Separation.



Fire Extinguishers

The following should be checked (AS 2444):

- The top of the extinguisher handle should be no more than 1200mm from the floor
- Extinguishers should not be within 2 metres of a switchboard.
- Extinguisher signs should be no higher than 2 metres from the floor and should match the extinguisher type.
- Extinguishers may be located in locked cupboards where resident behavior requires. In this case, staff must carry keys to the cupboard at all times and the door must have a breakable panel to provide access to the latching device or extinguisher.

Smoke & Thermal Detectors

Smoke detectors are to be provided to all areas. Thermal detectors can be provided to those areas where a spurious alarm may occur:

- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Pan Rooms
- Laundry

Bedrooms, offices, store rooms, lounge and dining rooms are not normally considered as areas where a spurious alarm may occur.

Smoke detectors may not be installed within 400mm of the end of a ceiling fan blade (AS 1670).

THERMAL

SMOKE

SMOKE

SMOKE DETECTOR WITHIN 400MM OF END OF FAN BLADE.

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Farewell & Welcomes

Steve Passfield is leaving the country! Tamworth will never be the same. Steve & Renate are heading to NZ for a very exciting venture running a pub and music venue, neatly combining Steve's passions! Steve will return to work for us on a needs basis. Steve has made a great contribution to the certification process over the past 9 years & will remain a good friend of all of the team at C.H. Group.

Robert Valades & Bryan Collum have joined the Certification Assessor team to service New South Wales and other States where required. Robert is a Director of Building Surveying firm, based in Penrith and Bryan is a Director a Building Surveying firm in Como West. Robert & Bryan recently attended C.H. Group's intense Certification Assessor Training Workshop in Melbourne over several days and are currently undergoing on site training as part of C.H. Group's Quality Assurance process. We welcome them to the team and look forward to working with them.