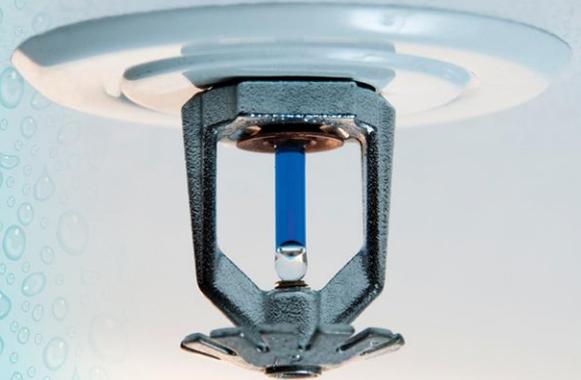


Fire sprinklers in aged care facilities



Overview of changes to the Regulation and Fire Sprinkler Standard

In this issue of the e-bulletin we provide an overview of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation Amendment (Fire Sprinklers) 2014 and the new Fire Sprinkler Standard dated December 2013. These new laws came into effect on 14 February 2014.

What are the changes?

The changes:

1. Provide an exemption from having to install fire sprinklers in some non-resident areas, subject to conditions.
2. Provide an exemption from having to install sprinklers in some electrical rooms and enclosures, subject to conditions.
3. Remove the need for the Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee to publish the individual cost of sprinkler installations.

The changes will enable some facilities to reduce their installation costs while still protecting lives and ensuring safety.

The changes follow consultation with various key industry groups including aged care industry representatives.

Fire and Rescue NSW support the changes to the Regulation and the Standard.

How can I get a copy of the new Regulation and revised Standard?

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation Amendment (Fire Sprinklers) 2014 and the revised Fire Sprinkler Standard are available on the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers

How do I find out more?

The department will provide more information about the changes shortly to assist stakeholders in the implementation of the requirements. This information will be particularly helpful for councils, certifiers and the fire protection industry.

How has the Fire Sprinkler Standard changed?

The Standard has changed to:

1. Include an exemption from the requirement to install fire sprinklers in certain non-resident areas which are located immediately below resident areas, where suitable fire and smoke barriers and an automatic smoke detection system exist in the non-resident area.

The exemption does not apply to high fire hazard use areas. High fire hazard use areas are car parks; kitchens and related food preparation areas with an aggregate floor area of more than 30m²; laundries, where items of equipment are of the type that are potential fire sources (e.g. gas fire dryers); and storage rooms greater than 10m².

2. Include an exemption from the requirement to install sprinklers in certain electrical rooms and enclosures, where suitable fire and smoke barriers and an automatic smoke detection system exist.
3. Remove the term 'concealed spaces'. The information provided in the department's Advisory Note, issued in July 2013, continues to apply (see www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sprinkler-installation-supporting-documents). The relevant Australian Standard determines which concealed spaces require protection.

My sprinkler system is being designed now. Do I have to begin the process again and comply with the revised Standard?

The revised Fire Sprinkler Standard applies to applications for approval to install a fire sprinkler system in a residential aged care facility lodged on or after 14 February 2014.

If you are an aged care provider and you lodged your application for your complying development certificate or construction certificate before 14 February 2014, the design of your system must comply with the original Fire Sprinkler Standard (dated 18 December 2012).

It is possible to lodge a new application under the revised Standard, even if you lodged an application under the old Standard.

There may be some advantages and cost savings in re-lodging your application for your complying development certificate or construction certificate and complying with the revised Standard, especially if your facility is of two or more storeys. Your sprinkler system designer should be able to provide further advice about this.

Do I need to obtain an approval for the installation of a sprinkler system?

Yes. You must obtain development consent / construction certificate) or a complying development certificate from either the local Council or an accredited private building certifier before the work commences to enable an occupation certificate to be issued at completion of the work. The occupation certificate must be submitted to the department's Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee to confirm completion of the project.

Approvals provide independent checks of your sprinkler design and installation. Amongst other things, the checks ensure that your sprinkler system complies with the Fire Sprinkler Standard.