Welcome

Welcome to the first e-bulletin on fire sprinklers in aged care facilities.

This bulletin will be published occasionally by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure for residential aged care providers, building approval authorities, the fire protection industry, consumer groups, and other people interested in this fire safety program.

Access to premises standards

The Department has received a number of enquiries on the application of the Disability (Access to Premises – buildings) Standards 2010 (Premises Standards) to fire sprinkler system retrofits.

The Guideline on the Application of the Premises Standards, Version 2 February 2013, issued by the Australian Human Rights Commission, states that installing fire-fighting services is not ordinarily regarded as an extension to or modification of a building sufficient to warrant the application of the Premises Standards. It also states that building certifiers might need to exercise some discretion in these matters.


Progress report released

Improving fire safety in aged care facilities: Progress report is now available on the Department’s website together with an interactive map showing all registered facilities and, where relevant, their sprinkler retrofit commitments. See these at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers.

The report provides a snapshot of the status of fire sprinkler system installations in aged care facilities as at March-April 2013. It draws on information from 314 Commonwealth-accredited residential aged care providers for 885 residential aged care facilities.

The Department thanks all aged care providers for their timely responses to the registration and nomination process.

We’d love to hear from you

If you want to subscribe to the e-bulletin, or if you have any feedback, please contact us. We welcome your comments and suggestions for future bulletins and feedback on the fire sprinkler program.

Contact Liz Skerrett on (02) 8575 4068 or liz.skerrett@planning.nsw.gov.au
Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee

The Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee monitors the overall progress of the retrofit program for fire sprinkler systems.

The Committee meets regularly and will perform key functions throughout the retrofit program, including reviewing fire sprinkler system implementation plans and progress reports, determining criteria for postponement applications, determining applications for postponement of completion date for installations and reporting annually on the overall program to the Director-General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, who must provide a copy of these reports to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and Minister for Ageing.

The Committee draws its expertise from a range of sectors and is an excellent case of cross-sector cooperation. The Committee was appointed by the Director General of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The Department provides secretariat services to the Committee. The list of members is at http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers.

Six steps to retrofitting sprinklers in aged care facilities

Six steps to retrofitting sprinklers in aged care facilities is a four-page guide for aged care providers covering the planning, design, installation, completion and post installation phases of installing sprinklers in existing facilities.

The guide focuses on the planning and building approvals you need.

To get a copy of the guide, go to www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers.

Fire sprinkler system installers

We have become aware of some misunderstanding about who is licensed to install fire sprinkler systems in NSW. Installers must be licensed by NSW Fair Trading.

NSW Fair Trading advise that a plumbing licence is a full licence and the holder of this licence may undertake any work within scope which includes but is not limited to fire protection / sprinkler work. The two water plumber licences (Water plumbing – fire protection system and Water plumbing – fire sprinkler systems) are the restricted licences, that is they are limited to fire protection or fire sprinkler systems only.

For more details see http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Tradespeople/Home_building_licensing/Licence_classes_and_qualifications/Plumbing_draining_and_gasfitting.html.

Simple guide on retrofitting sprinklers

Successful forum for aged care providers held on 26 July 2013

The recording of this half-day forum hosted by the Department is now available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers.

Highlights of the forum included case studies of retrofits from three aged care providers (Domain Principal Group, Baptist Community Services and SummitCare Australia) and a panel question and answer session.

Questions covered a range of topics including dealing with asbestos, water pressure reductions, retrofitting in occupied rooms, compliance with Standards and police checks of onsite contractors.
Building approval process

A reminder to aged care providers that all sprinkler retrofits must be approved by your local council or an accredited private building certifier before installing the sprinkler system.

Building approvals are an independent check on your sprinkler design and installation process.

Without an approval and appointment of a Principal Certifying Authority before installation starts, you cannot obtain an occupation certificate at the end of the project and submit it, as required, to the Fire Sprinkler Systems Implementation Committee. This upfront approval also ensures that the sprinkler system is included in your building’s fire safety schedule, the document which lists fire safety features that must be subject to ongoing performance checks.

Mandatory facility notices

A reminder to aged care providers that, since 30 April 2013, a physical notice is required at the main pedestrian entry of a facility if it does not have a fire sprinkler system. The notice must state that the facility does not have a system installed and the required installation date.

If the facility also has a website, a notice must also be placed on that website. This requirement also came into effect from 30 April 2013.

The required wording of the physical notice and the website notice, and the format requirements, including pro-forma notices for the physical notice, can be downloaded from the Department’s website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers.

Recent advisory notes:

April 2013 – Overview of the new laws on installing sprinklers in residential aged care facilities and how the legislation works.

July 2013 – Clarification on the Fire Sprinkler Standard and how it applies to installing sprinklers in concealed spaces (e.g. roof spaces and under floors).


For further information visit the department’s website www.planning.nsw.gov.au/firesprinklers or contact us on 02 8575 4068