

Built Environment

BULLETIN

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FIRE INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO COVID-19 VIRUS PANDEMIC

The current COVID-19 virus pandemic is providing extreme challenges for many people within our community now. This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. As a result, it will continue to be important to ensure the essential services within buildings are maintained in operational condition to ensure the ongoing safety of the broader community.

Fire safety systems both fixed and portable are critical to the health and safety of building occupants especially those of high risk such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools and short-term accommodation. The fire protection industry performs an important role in maintaining and repairing these systems.

Maintenance and repairs to an installed or portable fire safety system must continue to occur unless the Federal or Tasmanian State Government imposes specific restrictions that prevent this from happening. The work must be completed in line with the General Fire Regulations 2010 and the Building Regulations 2016 and the relevant Australian Standards and as designed.

Contractors must undertake an analysis of the work required to repair and maintain the fire safety systems including portable equipment that includes protection against infection. Of course, there will be instances where it is deemed unsafe to undertake this work. Where this occurs an appropriate risk assessment should be undertaken and all alternate avenues of completing the work must be exhausted.

All repairs and maintenance must be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards. Fire Protection Systems Permit holders should refer to section 8 of the Code of Practice for further information. If a responsible person cannot provide access to their building or part thereof to provide servicing in accordance with the relevant Australian Standard for three

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consecutive months, notification must be made to Tasmania Fire Service on a 'Form 6.8 – Notification of Defect'.

It should be noted that in Australian Standard 1851, section 1.11 outlines frequency tolerances for routine servicing schedules. Where possible these must be complied with including portable fire equipment such as fire extinguishers. If Portable Equipment Permit Holders are experiencing problems accessing premises to undertake routine maintenance, they must exhaust all avenues of undertaking the work before reporting this in writing to Tasmania Fire Service.

We will continue to monitor the situation and will provide up dated information as it comes to hand. It is our absolute priority to work with the industry during these difficult times to assist in maintaining the safety of the community.

