



INFORMATION SHEET

BUILDING

Ref: NAT BCA 12-03

Overview of Changes to BCA2012 – Volume 1 (Nat)

This information sheet provides details of the proposed changes to Volume 1 of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) in 2012. The information is based on the pre-publication draft released in late 2011. The BCA became part of the 'National Construction Code' in 2011 which incorporates building and plumbing construction regulations and is implemented through State and Territory legislation on 1 May 2012.

The new 2012 edition of the code will introduce some unprecedented changes to the provisions under both Volume 1 for Class 2-9 buildings and Volume 2 for Class 1 and 10 buildings (the Housing Provisions).

Note - the following does not provide details on changes to various State or Territory variations; further detail on both State and Territory specific provisions and the general provisions can be obtained from BCA 2012 when published.

Specific changes to Volume 1 (Class 2 – 9 buildings) include:

- a new definition of *early childhood centre* that refers to national legislation in relation to the meaning and excludes education and care provided outside school hours
- a new definition of an *electricity network substation* which means a building in which high voltage supply is converted or transformed and which is controlled by a licenced network service provider designated under a power of legislation
- a new definition of '*House Energy Rating Software*' which means software accredited under the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme and is limited to assessing the potential thermal efficiency of the dwelling envelope
- definitions have been included in relation to **wet areas** to compliment the inclusion of a new table that designates what areas of certain buildings are required to be waterproof or water resistant
- a new requirement under Specification C1.11 re performance of **external walls** in fire in relation to the general requirements for external wall panels that connections providing lateral support to a wall panel must remain engaged to the panel during a fire
- a balustrade or barrier serving a **fire-isolated stairway or ramp** must ensure that if rails are used as a barrier, the gap between the bottom rail and stair nosing must not allow a 150mm sphere to pass through the opening; the 2011 provisions only provided that a maximum 150mm gap must be maintained
- specific requirements for **handrails to a stairway or ramp** within a *sole-occupancy unit* in a Class 2 or 3 building or Class 4 part which relates to height, position and the requirement for

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the handrail to be continuous apart from where they meet a balustrade or at a newel post associated with a winder

- an exemption for a **Class 8** electricity network substation to provide hose reels and a fire hydrant system if it cannot be connected to town main water supply and provides a one hour water storage for fire fighting. A Class 8 electricity network substation will also be exempt from providing sprinklers if in a multi-classified building with a floor area not more than 200m²
- a new verification method for **Emergency Lighting** which confirms compliance with the relevant performance requirement if both the emergency lighting satisfies certain illuminance levels
- new requirements for facilities in **Class 9b Early Childhood Centres** that now includes the requirement for separate hand washing facilities in kitchens. The kitchen facilities must also be protected by a gate to prevent unsupervised access of children younger than 5 years old and the ability to facilitate the supervision of children younger than 2 years old. Also it is required to provide a nappy changing bench in an Early Childhood Centre and sanitary compartments used by children must be screened by a partition which except for the doorway is opaque for a height of 900mm but not more than 1200mm above the floor level
- a new requirement in relation to methods and extent of **natural lighting** in a Class 9b Early Childhood Centre; the sills of 50% of *windows* in children's rooms must be located not more than 500 mm above the floor level
- provisions for **ventilation requirements for carparks** with more than 40 vehicle spaces controlled by atmospheric contaminant monitoring systems. When the monitored condition is below the maximum determined concentration level the system can be turned off if controlled by an intermittent air exchange system or where a supplemental natural ventilation system is provided
- a new provision for outdoor play spaces in **early childhood centres** where play spaces must be enclosed on all sides with suitable barriers that will satisfy the requirements for pool fences. This will not apply to walls, doors or windows forming part of the enclosure
- changes to the table in relation to adjustment of minimum R-Value for loss of **ceiling insulation** that provides lower minimum R-Values and adjusted R-Value

Details of the changes proposed to both Volume 1 and Volume 2 are outlined in HIA's information sheet '[Overview of Changes to BCA 2012](#)'.

Details of the changes proposed under Volume 2 are outlined in HIA's information sheet '[Proposed changes to BCA 2012 – Volume 2 Housing Provisions](#)'.

For more information on any of the changes to the BCA this year, HIA members can contact the Building Services staff in your region on 1300 650 620 or technical@hia.com.au.