



INFORMATION SHEET

BUILDING SERVICES

Ref: NAT BCA 11-03

Proposed Changes to BCA 2011 (Nat)

The Building Code of Australia (BCA) 2011 will become part of the 'National Construction Code' series from 1 May 2011. Initially this will incorporate building and plumbing standards and eventually it is planned to include all on-site construction regulation including electrical installations and telecommunications.

From 2011, there will be a new Volume 3 to be known as the Plumbing Code of Australia.

This information sheet has been prepared based on the pre-publication draft of BCA 2011.

The 2011 editions of the Code will introduce various changes to both Volume 1 for Class 2 - 9 buildings and Volume 2 for Class 1 and 10 buildings (the Housing Provisions).

The main changes relate to the classification of buildings, accessibility, and timber framing requirements due to the BCA now referencing the revised Australian Standard for residential timber construction.

In addition, for Victoria, the 6-star energy efficiency provisions will be adopted under Part 3.12 for Class 1 dwellings and Part J for Class 2 apartments.

The general changes that will affect both volumes include:

- a new classification for private bushfire shelters - Class 10c and definition for private bushfire shelter which means a structure associated with, but not attached to, or part of a Class 1a dwelling that may, as a last resort, provide shelter for occupants from immediate life threatening effects of a bushfire
- a definition for renewable energy in relation to energy efficiency that means energy that is derived from sources that are regenerated, replenished, or for all practical purposes cannot be depleted and the energy sources include, but are not limited to, solar, wind, hydroelectric, wave action and geothermal. This will widen the scope for compliance under a performance approach
- a new definition for luminance contrast which means the light reflected from one surface or component, compared to the light reflected from another surface or component. This relates to the provisions for braille and tactile signs in relation to accessibility and accessways in public transport buildings in BCA Volume 1
- a new classification for a Class 1b — a boarding house, guest house, hostel or the like, which now includes four or more single dwellings located on one allotment used for short term holiday accommodation

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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- the BCA has now been aligned with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). The BCA is to adopt the Premises Standard, which applies under the DDA. This will introduce enhanced accessibility requirements in Volume 1 of the BCA.
- a referenced to the revised Australian Standard for the general requirements for access for people with a disability (AS 1428 part 1) and the introduction of the Standard for enhanced and additional requirements for buildings and facilities (AS 1428 Part 2). Also a reference to the revised standard in relation to tactile ground surface indicators will be included (AS 1428 part 4.1).
- reference to the revised Australian Standard for residential timber framed construction (AS 1684 - 2010). The new Standard includes much editorial change and also a change to the timber span tables due to the changes to AS 1720.1 Timber Structures Code for MGP grades.

Specific changes to Volume 1 include:

- changes to the performance requirements for access to buildings to include the approach from a road boundary and accessible carparking space, associated accessible buildings, work spaces and public spaces, accommodation and facilities for personal hygiene and identification of accessways
- new deemed-to-satisfy provisions for public transport buildings under the new Part H2
- new provisions for public transport buildings in relation to provision for escape, access for people with a disability, lift installations, sanitary facilities and access and egress
- changes to the fire hazard properties provisions
- new provisions for passenger lifts to align with the Premises Standard
- new provisions under 'Heating and cooling systems' for the use of electric heating where the heating capacity is restricted in certain Climate Zones, where reticulated gas is not available or where the annual energy consumption based on conditioned floor area in certain Climate Zones does not exceed a certain level. There are also new provisions for an in-duct heater.

Specific changes to Volume 2 (Housing Provisions) include:

- a new referenced Australian Standard for masonry in small buildings (AS 4773)
- a new performance provision for private bushfire shelters that requires among other things the consideration of material used to construct a shelter, structural and fire loads, topology and distance between the shelter and fire hazards. Also the size of the potential fire source, wind loadings, external and internal signage are considered
- clarification that the nominal size of aggregate in concrete is 20mm maximum
- new explanatory information on compacting concrete under Part 2.3.2 'Concrete and Reinforcing'
- a note under figure 3.3.1.1 in relation to unreinforced masonry clarifies that flat ceilings may act as lateral support to walls
- inclusion of AS 1562.1 as the acceptable construction manual under part 3.5.3 'Wall Cladding'

- a new explanatory diagram and information under figure 3.8.2.1 in relation to measurement of acceptable ceiling heights
- a new explanatory note under 3.9.2.2 'When balustrades or other barriers are required', that notes it is deemed possible for a person to fall through an openable window when a 125mm sphere is able to pass through the window opening
- changes to the provisions under 'Balustrades and other barrier construction' that exempt a window serving as a barrier from the loading forces requirements in accordance with AS/NZS 1170.1
- new explanatory information that a window forming part of a barrier is not required to comply with the AS/NZS 1170.1 in relation to structural design actions. However, a *window* serving as a barrier must comply with the glazing assembly provisions of AS 2047 or AS 1288. These provisions consider the wind loading on the glass and human impact requirements
- explanatory information in relation to a *window* forming part of a barrier, that notes a window sill between 150 mm and 760 mm above the floor is deemed to facilitate climbing
- explanatory Information under the building fabric thermal insulation provisions in relation to the installation of insulation to ensure it does not interfere with the safety or performance of domestic services
- change to the explanatory note in relation to the compression of bulk insulation that states the R-Value will be reduced if insulation is compressed
- a new note under the explanatory information in relation to external glazing for energy efficiency that the provisions assume that internal window coverings will be installed for privacy reasons, and that this assumption is already incorporated in the allowances for glazing.
- new explanatory information in relation to the term 'winter access' that it refers to solar gains to offset conducted heat losses and the impact of shading that it considers solar heat gain to be beneficial or detrimental based on seasonal variation
- removal of the requirement under artificial lighting for the purpose of energy efficiency where lamps are used that have a transformer or ballast, that the transformer or ballast must be of the electronic type

Members wanting to find out more these changes and about the new Volume 3 Plumbing Code of Australia can attend seminars being arranged by the Australian Building Codes Board in your state. For more information go to the ABCB webpage.

HIA members can contact HIA Building Services staff on hia_technical@hia.com.au or call 1300 650 620 to find out more about changes to BCA 2011.