

WELCOME FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR



I am pleased to welcome you to the first edition of **Landlord News**, a publication to keep commercial property owners and their managing agents in touch with the latest in essential safety measures and government regulations.

With well over 3000 safety inspections each year our company AESI stands at the forefront of protecting property and people while giving property owners 'peace of mind' that their investment is in good hands.

Our quarterly newsletter Landlord News gives us the opportunity to share with you the latest industry news, views and tips across our industry and trust it assists all landlords, agents and tenants with essential safety management.

Your contribution in any form would be appreciated.

David Hassett

PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT (be it for your own use or for rental purposes)

Next to your home, owning a commercial property be it for your own use or for rental purposes can be your greatest asset. A greater understanding of the laws and regulations that govern the property's safety and that of its occupants can prove invaluable in protecting this asset.

The building regulations of 2006 require that nearly all buildings other than a house or outbuilding state that the owner is responsible for maintaining safety fittings and equipment and essential safety measures (ESMs) over the life of the building. The essential safety measures cover traditional fire services such as alarms, sprinklers, fire extinguishers and hydrants. They also include passive fire safety features like fire doors, exit signs, emergency lighting, discharge from exits and clear paths of travel.

Owners or their authorised managing agents are required by law to prepare an ESM report outlining this responsibility. The building surveyor or the chief fire officer is responsible for the enforcement of these regulations and non-compliance can result in substantial fines and insurance issues. More importantly non-compliance could place not only the occupants at risk but also passers-by and the adjoining buildings.

For additional information on maintaining ESMs and owner compliance please refer to the Building commission website www.buildingcommission.com.au or contact AESI.

THE OH&S RESPONSIBILITY

Under the various legislative frameworks it is the responsibility of (Landlords/Body Corporates/Owners Corporations) to take reasonable measures to eliminate/mitigate hazards that create a risk to life, health, property and the environment.

In addition to responsibilities under the Essential Services legislation, responsibilities in the following OH&S areas should be monitored.

- Slip, trip and fall hazards
- Security such as gates and access control systems
- Adequacy of internal/external lighting
- Pedestrian safety in car parks (signage, speed control, safe walking areas)
- General housekeeping in common areas (safe stairways and clear pathways)
- Garden safety management (unsafe trees and branches, dangerous foliage to walkways and roofline) etc.

Regular property inspections should be undertaken to identifying and controlling these risks with a view to minimizing liability.

DEALING WITH ASBESTOS

Every year in Australia hundreds of people die from asbestos related diseases. This material is now banned and therefore illegal to use in any new products in Australia. The ban however does not extend to asbestos-containing products in existing installations such as vinyl floor tiles, asbestos cement, electrical boards and (AC) roofing or sheeting. These products can be left in place until they need to be replaced. It is prudent for landlords to be aware of these products and that their removal can only be by a licenced asbestos removalist.

The landlord as far as reasonably practicable must eliminate or reduce exposure of persons to air born asbestos fibres. Maintaining a current asbestos register for each property is required and necessary to limit exposure.

AESI has experienced consultants that can prepare asbestos registers, inspect and sample any suspected material and have it analysed at our accredited authority.

CASE STUDY

How a Landlord Problem was solved



Recently a country hotel had a visit from the local municipal building inspector who requested to see the audit report for the Essential Safety Measures installed at the property.

The owners were unaware that under the safety regulations as per the Building Code of Australia 2006 they were required to have an annual inspection & provide an audit report as per the format specified in the Building Code .

The report is required to be provided within 24 hours of the request from the municipal building inspector, he in this case extended the time to 4 days.

The owners contacted AESI who were able to send an inspector down to the site the next day. He completed the inspection and faxed it to the office where it was completed Saturday morning, emailed to the hotel for the inspector's return visit on the Monday.

No fines were imposed and the hotel got a big tick for acting quickly and providing a compliant report.



WHERE'S OUR FIRE EXTINGUISHER??

When faced with an emergency is your extinguisher located in an accessible position? Is it hidden behind empty boxes or other items that you keep thinking you must move and never get around to doing? All too often we see Fire Extinguishers that have been lost in amongst the shop/warehouse fittings and stock items.

All fire equipment requires a 1 metre clearance. This makes the equipment accessible in a fire situation and together with suitable signage ensures that it is visible to the occupiers of the property and people who may only be visitors to the site.

A common non-compliant feature is when a fire extinguisher is located too close to the power board. The power board is where electrical problems can be a major contributor to starting fires that can quickly escalate across the property. To be ready for such a happening, the recommended action is to locate a dry powder fire extinguisher between two metres of the switchboard and certainly no further away than twenty metres.

Take time to know where your extinguishers are and educate your staff and tenants in understanding and being compliant with property laws.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Maintaining the safety of your property is paramount to protecting your investment. For professional and confidential advice and service on any aspect regarding Essential Safety Measures or OH&S contact:

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