



A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

MAINTAINING YOUR BUILDING COMPLIANCE DURING COVID 19

In light of the difficult Government restrictions currently facing business, it's important we remind commercial building owners that Government Legislation still requires owners to ensure the ongoing maintenance and compliance of Essential Safety Measures (ESMs) on the property. This is supported by the VBA who says; if you are the owner of a building (other than a house or outbuilding), you are responsible for its upkeep and maintenance – particularly its safety features. These are known as Essential Safety Measures and include Fire extinguishers * Exits & Emergency Lighting * Fire hose reels & Hydrants * Smoke and fire alarms.

Non-compliance can carry severe penalties and it has been brought to my notice the National Fire Industry Association (NFIA) are currently reporting that their members across Australia have stopped performing the annual building fire protection routine service and maintenance work. The NFIA say this action could greatly affect nursing homes, high-rise blocks, pubs and clubs and we predict the longer it continues then the potential of buildings not being compliant could easily flow onto hospitals, residential apartment buildings and the like.

To add “fuel to the fire” there are also potential insurance implications where a building is damaged or destroyed by fire because the required servicing and maintenance is not carried out and we know Insurance companies can make things difficult even in these unforeseen Covid 19 circumstances.

AESI COMMENT Many investors and businesses that own their property tend to have a closed mind on the devastating consequences a fire would have on their business. Flames, smoke and indeed water used to extinguish the fire can severely damage the building and its contents, often causing a partial or full shutdown of operations. This unexpected stop to business can be financially draining as costs such as wages, income losses and repair and replacement expenses are often not covered by fire insurance. Responsible management shouldn't wait for a fire to happen and we have to say it's simply not worth the risk!

As Covid19 has caused many businesses to be closed it may be a good time to organise your annual building fire safety check. AESI is readily available to fit in with the owner or tenant to check and Audit your compliance status. (We just need to arrange a suitable “building open” time and we'll be there.) Call the office Ph 9894 2064.

David Hassett MD AESI

OBLIGATIONS IF FIRE STRIKES THE WORKPLACE

If you're a landlord or occupier of a business or commercial premises it is likely you'll be responsible for fire safety.

Responsibilities include:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises and review it regularly
- Tell staff or their representatives about the risks you've identified
- Put in place, and maintain, appropriate fire safety measures
- Plan for an emergency
- Provide staff with information on fire safety instruction and training.



Penalties and enforcement Offenders could be fined or go to prison if they refuse to follow fire safety regulations. Local fire, council and rescue authorities randomly inspect commercial premises and can issue fire safety notices authorising the immediate changes you will need to make.

Now is the time for commercial property managers/owners to identify and assess all potential fire hazards in the business and understand the risks associated with lack of maintenance and improper use. We see it each year where the cold winter months in particular present a greater risk for workplace fires with overworking of heating systems and malfunctions in electrical equipment presenting the most likely dangers.

LANDLORD NEWS



WHEN DID YOU LAST CHECK YOUR LEASE?

Commercial property owners would be well-advised to check their lease annually to confirm their rights with common situations that may arise with tenants including:

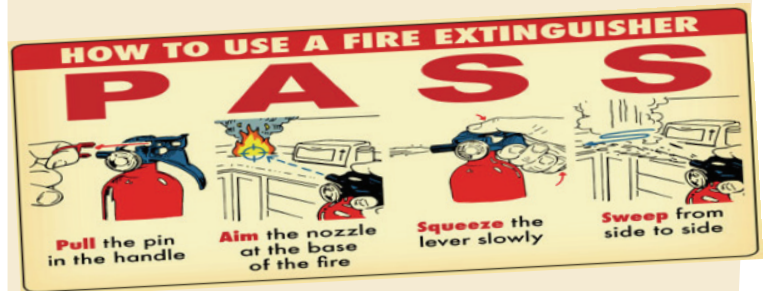
- Your right to inspect a property to ensure all safety requirements are observed
- Your right to approve tenant fit-outs and compliance with ESMs
- Your right to rectify matters at the tenants expense if they don't comply with Essential Safety Measures (ESMs) and are the tenants responsibility
- Your right to access the property to ensure overall safety compliance

DID YOU KNOW?

In the context of building fire safety, fire impact is considered to be any threat to life and property caused by heat or smoke and may include adverse environmental impact from toxic products stored on the premises.

A RECENT LANDLORD QUESTION

Most commercial properties have a number of fire extinguishers with varying fire protection capabilities but how many staff know how to operate them effectively?



OUR WINTER SAFETY TIP!

Keep it neat & it won't overheat

The simple message to Shops, Offices and Factories this winter is **Check power points & power boards!**

- Overloaded power points and power boards can overheat and quickly cause a fire.
- Fire services recommend only using power boards with built in safety circuit breakers.
- Place power boards on their sides to prevent dust build up in unused points.
- Regularly check that all plugs are firmly fixed in power boards.
- Remember to untangle twisted extension cords, particularly under desks and work benches.



AESI ... EXPERTS IN FIRE SAFETY & ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES

Making your property fire safe is paramount to saving lives and protecting your valuable investment.

AESI expertise will steer you in the right direction with all aspects of fire safety and building compliance namely: Current Building compliance and safety audits; Essential Safety Measures inspections & maintenance; Asbestos identification and compliance; Evacuation Plans & Training, Repairs and Maintenance, and OH&S Audit and Report.

AUSTRALIAN ESSENTIAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

For confidential advice and assistance contact AESI.

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