



Building Certification

Understanding your legislative requirement for annual fire safety statements



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Building Certification

Many building owners are unaware of their obligations in relation to building certification. In many cases this requirement is not strictly enforced by local planning authorities; however this appears to be changing in many jurisdictions.

The requirements for building certification vary between each state and territory. In NSW, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 2000 (Division 5) require an Annual Fire Safety Statement to be issued by or on behalf of the owner of a building each year.

The Annual Fire Safety Statement lists the essential fire safety measures for the building and the relevant standard of performance. Essential services include fire protection systems such as sprinklers, fire detection, EWIS systems, fire hose reels and portable extinguishers. It also includes equipment installed to assist building occupants during an emergency such as exit signage and emergency lighting.

In signing the statement the signatory confirms that these essential services have been maintained and are performing in accordance with their relevant performance standard.

In order to be able to sign such a statement, the signatory must be confident that these systems have not only been maintained, but have also been performance tested. There are a range of standards in place for maintenance and performance testing of essential services, with the primary standard being *AS1851:2005 Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems*.

In signing this statement, the signatory accepts responsibility for confirming to the local planning authority and to the fire brigade that the building is safe. This responsibility should not be taken lightly.

For simple buildings, the essential services are limited and the maintenance and performance testing is relatively routine, being conducted by specialist contractors. For complex buildings, many of the essential services interact and so performance testing is much more complex.

Our Solution

RiskTech Pty Ltd can provide the expertise to conduct the necessary site inspections and witness the performance testing conducted by specialist maintenance contractors for all essential services. RiskTech will then provide a report verifying the adequate performance of all essential services and, if necessary, sign the Annual Fire Safety Statement on behalf of the owner.

Where the performance tests identify inadequate performance, RiskTech will work with the specialist maintenance contractors to identify the necessary work to rectify and witness additional tests to confirm adequate performance.

The certification process requires:-

- Review of documentation in relation to maintenance activities;
- Review of commissioning test data in relation to performance test data;
- Witness operational performance tests conducted by specialist contractors;
- Inspection of all essential services to verify condition;
- Where necessary provide a defect report;
- Re-inspect to confirm all reported defects have been rectified; and finally
- Issue the Annual Fire Safety Statement as an agent of the building owner.

Whilst the legislative requirements vary between states, RiskTech recommends a standard approach be applied across a property owner's portfolio, which is capable of meeting the requirements of each state's legislation. RiskTech's process is based on the NSW legislation, which is considered one of the most stringent.

The Benefits

The benefit of engaging RiskTech to manage your building certification requirements include:-

- Confidence that the necessary technical expertise is controlling the building certification process;
- Evidence of the fulfilment of your duty of care; and
- An independent influence able to monitor the performance of maintenance contractors.

To provide professional and unbiased service to our clients based on best practice in the field of risk management.

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