



## Building Fire Safety Committee – Out of Council Areas

### **Q – Why do we need a Building Fire Safety Committee?**

**A** – Councils play an important role in protecting the safety of people that visit, live in and use buildings. To ensure buildings are safe to use, it is important that the fire safety items installed as part of the approval are operational and maintained.

All council areas are required under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act) to form a Building Fire Safety Committee (BFSC) to take on the role of investigating buildings' fire safety levels ensuring they are maintained and operational.

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### **Q – Is there a BFSC for the Out of Council Areas of South Australia?**

**A** – Yes, there is – On 24 October 2019, the State Planning Commission (Commission) established the Building Fire Safety Committee (BFSC) for Out of Council Areas as an 'appropriate authority' for the purposes of section 157 of the PDI Act to review and monitor building fire safety in South Australia's out-of-council areas.

Prior to establishing the BFSC for Out of Council Areas, the Commission assumed these responsibilities and functions for out-of-council areas – a role that was previously the responsibility of the Development Assessment Commission under the *Development Act 1993*.

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### **Q – What will the BFSC consider when assessing if fire safety is adequate?**

**A** – When the BFSC inspects a building, the members will check to see what fire safety items have been installed, are working and being regularly maintained.

Other items that the BFSC will look at to determine if the fire safety is adequate include:

- Blocked or obstructed exits
- Obstructions in paths to exits
- Door hardware and door swings in exits that obstruct or make evacuation difficult
- Fire and smoke hazards (including storage of flammable material under egress stairs)
- Inadequate lighting to locate exits and safe evacuation points
- Inadequate warning of a fire or other emergency alert for people inside the building to evacuate safely
- Insufficient smoke control features

## **Q – How can the BFSC help you?**

**A –** Should a building's fire safety levels be identified as inadequate, the BFSC will inform the building owner of any identified inadequacies and provide them with information to clarify what the concerns are and help in rectifying them.

The BFSC will also provide the building owner the opportunity to carry out any necessary actions and report back in writing to confirm when the agreed actions have been completed. In instances where a lot of work needs to be undertaken, the building owner can prepare a schedule of works including timeframes as to when each action will be completed and get an endorsement from the BFSC.

If you are have difficulties in identifying appropriate fire safety maintenance contractors to conduct the necessary maintenance, repairs, installation and certification, it is suggested that you contact Fire Protection Association Australia who will be able to assist in identifying appropriate contractors to assist you.

### **Fire Protection Association**

(03) 8892 3131

[connect.fpaa.com.au/Connect/Provider/Provider\\_of\\_choice.aspx](http://connect.fpaa.com.au/Connect/Provider/Provider_of_choice.aspx)

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## **Q – What obligations does a building owner have when interacting with the BFSC?**

**A –** The BFSC will always attempt to communicate with building owners in relation to any interactions necessary (i.e. arranging inspection times, access into buildings, written communications). Building owners are encouraged to work collaboratively with the BFSC to enable it to complete its functions easily and ensure all actions to improve the level of fire safety is achieved as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The BFSC is aware of the potential financial implications to businesses and individuals in managing building fire safety levels and take this into consideration when identifying rectification works.

Although, in situations where the BFSC consider it an emergency or dangerous – it has the legislative powers under the PDI Act that authorises them to perform certain functions; including issuing verbal directions and legal notices for instances requiring urgent building works to be performed, through to high risk situations where the BFSC considers it necessary to prohibit the occupation of a building to protect the occupants.

Generally, the BFSC will attempt to negotiate a cost effective solution with the building owner that will reduce fire safety risks to an acceptable level and meet the required fire safety performance.

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## **Q – How often do the BFSC conduct their reviews?**

**A –** Due to the remote location and vast distances, the BFSC are proposing to conduct a minimum of two reviews a year. In addition, to these visits, the BFSC will continue to communicate and work collaboratively with building owners and occupiers to resolve any concerns the Committee may have raised and assist with any new queries. In addition, should a need be identified for an urgent site visit, the Committee is able to utilise the services of the local Council Fire Service if required.

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### **Additional Information:**

Should you require any additional information or clarifications, please contact the Building Fire Safety Committee for Out of Council Areas via [AGD.SPCBuildingFireSafetyCommittee@sa.gov.au](mailto:AGD.SPCBuildingFireSafetyCommittee@sa.gov.au) or call 1800 752 664