



Building newsflash number 440

Alert on the potential risk of using non-compliant thermal insulation

Purpose

Further to newsflash 419 published on 19 March 2010, this newsflash is to alert stakeholders on the potential risk of using non-compliant thermal insulation.

Background

Under the Australian Government's discontinued Home Insulation Program, it was mandatory for all insulation products to comply with the labelling, testing, quality assurance and other requirements contained in AS/NZS 4859.1:2002 Materials for the thermal insulation of buildings. This requirement is also consistent with section J and part 3.12 of the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

The discontinued Home Insulation Program had a strong uptake from home owners, resulting in some installers having to find new sources of insulation products, including importing materials from overseas suppliers, in order to meet demands. The Australian Government advises it has received information that some insulation products may not be appropriately tested and may not comply with AS/NZS 4859.1:2002.

Legislation

Under the deemed-to-satisfy provisions of BCA section J and part 3.12.1 required insulation must comply with AS/NZS 4859.1:2002.

As previously advised in newsflash 419, installation of roof or ceiling insulation in a building is defined as 'building work' under section 5 of the *Building Act 1975* (BA). If roof or ceiling insulation is installed in an existing building, it would generally be self assessable building work under schedule 1 of the Building Regulation 2006. This means the work must comply with the building assessment provisions, including the BCA and Queensland Development Code (QDC), but the work does not require a building development approval.

Under amendments to the BA commencing on 31 March 2010, if the work does not comply with the relevant elemental provisions of the BCA and acceptable solutions of the QDC (i.e. an alternative solution is sought), it is no longer self assessable building work under section 21 of the BA and would therefore require a building approval.



Recommendations

Advice from the Australian Government recommends that building practitioners take particular care in checking that insulation complies with AS/NZS 4859.1:2002 prior to installation, including:

- obtaining a copy of a report by an accredited laboratory showing that the insulation product complies with testing, labelling and quality assurance requirements of AS/NZS 4859.1:2002
- checking that labelling or manufacturing supply documentation includes a statement that the insulation product complies with AS/NZS 4859.1:2002
- checking that the labelling or manufacturing documentation declares the R-value of the product, and that this meets the specified R-value for the location of the building
- only purchasing insulation from reputable sources.

Contact for further information

Department of Infrastructure and Planning
Building Codes Queensland Division

tel +61 7 3239 6369

buildingcodes@dip.qld.gov.au

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