



Building Newsflash

AMENDMENTS TO BCA2006

Purpose

To provide details of the commencement date for the next edition of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and highlight the major changes.

Background

Amendments to the BCA **including energy efficiency requirements for Class 5 to 9** buildings will commence in Queensland on 1 May 2006.

The revised energy efficiency requirements for class 1 buildings (the five star standard) **will not commence** in Queensland on 1 May 2006. The current provisions in BCA 2005 will still apply to Class 1 and 10 buildings.

Legislation

Issues addressed in BCA 2006 include –

Separating walls

3.7.1.8(f) of Volume 2 is a new provision that allows service penetration openings in masonry separating walls between Class 1 buildings provided they have an FRL of not less than -/60/60. The provision is intended to address service penetrations in the walls. This is reinforced in the Explanatory Notes accompanying the provision. Issues relating to sound attenuation still need to be addressed.

Service penetration openings in separating walls of lightweight construction under 3.1.7.8 (b) are not currently permitted under the deemed-to-satisfy requirements of the BCA. An alternate solution would need to be assessed against the performance requirements of the BCA if openings are proposed in these walls.

New testing regime for roofs in cyclonic regions

Part B1 and Clause 3.10.1.0 (f) of Volumes 1 and 2 respectively have been amended to incorporate a new test method for the testing of metal roofing in cyclone areas. The new amendment will:

- Reduce the vulnerability of housing to severe winds as a result of products being tested to a standard that is representative of the actual wind loading conditions that occur during a cyclone.
- Provide a nationally consistent test that will encourage manufacturers to develop efficient building products and reduce testing costs with one uniform test.

For a period of two years, the BCA will allow both the current and new testing methods to be used by the building industry. This will allow industry to use products tested under the current or new systems. It will also provide the industry with ample time to retest products under the new system. In 2008, the BCA will only allow products that pass the new test method to be used.

New energy efficiency provisions for commercial and industrial buildings

Part J of Volume 1 of the BCA has been amended to include energy efficiency requirements for class 5 to 9 buildings.

The amendment includes requirements for roof/ceiling and wall insulation, and the treatment of glazing. There are also requirements for building services including air-conditioning, ventilation, lighting, hot water and lifts.

Five star energy efficiency provisions for houses

The Department raised a number of concerns with the ABCB in regard to the impact the proposed five star housing provisions will have on some forms of house construction in Queensland. In particular, concerns were raised about the impact of the provisions on concrete block houses, and houses that are appropriately designed for the climate. These concerns were reinforced in workshops held in Townsville and Cairns with builders and designers earlier this year.

Queensland will delay any adoption of five star housing in Queensland until these matters have been adequately addressed. For this reason, Queensland will **not** be increasing the stringency of energy efficient housing to five stars on 1 May 2006. The current BCA 2005 provisions will therefore continue to apply in Queensland until further notice.

Amendment of the termite management measures for houses

The Queensland amendments will specify a life span for termite management systems consistent with other Australian Standards referenced in the BCA. For systems used on sheds and other ancillary structures associated with a house, the life span must not be less than 40 years. For houses, the life span must be not less than 50 years.

The amendment will have no impact on termite management measures that are easily and readily accessible for replenishment or replacement and the measure used is capable of being replenished or replaced.

The amendment will not impact on buildings and structures that are deemed not susceptible to termite attack. For example clause 3.1.3 (Application of this Part) of Volume 2 of the BCA does not apply to primary building elements that are naturally resistant or consist of preservative treated timber complying with AS3660.1.

Amendment of AS1530.4

Where an element of a building is required to have a fire resistance level (FRL), it must be determined in accordance with Specification A2.3 of the Volume 1 of the BCA. Testing against AS1530 Part 4 is a deemed-to-satisfy means of complying with Spec A2.3. Spec A2.3 requires a report, complying with AS1530.4, to be provided confirming the FRL achieved. AS1530.4 has been amended to allow either a full report (Clause 2.15.2) or a short-form report (Clause 2.15.3) to be provided.

Testing of wall, floor and ceiling linings

Specification C1.10 of Volume 1 has been amended to remove the choice of testing floor covering and wall and ceiling linings against either C1.10 or C1.10a of the BCA. In July 2003, industry was advised that for a period of two years floor materials and floor coverings, and wall and ceiling linings would be permitted to comply with **either** Specification C1.10 or Specification C1.10a. This was to allow industry time to test all materials in accordance with the new requirements. Floor materials and floor coverings must comply with the required critical radiant flux, and wall and ceiling linings must have the required material group number rather than have the option of complying with AS/NZS 1530.3.

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