

# > General Fire Safety

General fire safety of buildings includes issues such as housekeeping, storage of flammable materials, work practices, emergency management plans, staff fire awareness and fire equipment training.

## General Fire Safety - Checklist

- ✓ Are paths of travel to exits clear?
- ✓ Are rubbish and combustible materials disposed of appropriately on a regular basis?
- ✓ Does the building have an emergency management plan?
- ✓ Have building occupants performed regular evacuation drills?
- ✓ Have the building occupants been trained in the use of fire extinguishers & fire hose reels?
- ✓ Do building occupants use work practices that increase the risk of fire?



### Are paths of travel to exits clear?

Paths of travel to exits should be clear of obstructions at all times to allow building occupants to safely evacuate or exit a building. Common obstructions in these areas may include stock, office furniture and machinery. A clear path of at least travel of 1 metre wide should be provided at all times.

### Are rubbish and combustible materials disposed of on a regular basis?

Bins containing rubbish should be emptied daily. Stockpiles of cardboard, wood and other combustible materials should also be disposed of regularly. Checks of buildings for good house keeping practices should be conducted regularly.

### Does the building have an emergency management plan?

Emergency management plans are to allow building occupants to understand their actions required in the event of an emergency. All building occupants should be provided training in the use and operation of emergency management plans.

### Have building occupants performed regular evacuation drills?

CFA recommends evacuation drills be conducted at least once a year. In addition, all new employees should be informed of emergency procedures.

### Have the building occupants been trained in the use of fire extinguishers & fire hose reels?

CFA recommends that training on the use and operation of fire equipment should be conducted every 12 months and when new employees or occupants start / occupy the building.

### Do the building occupants use work practices that increase the risk of fire?

Staff should not undertake work practices that may increase the risk of fire such as conducting hot work (welding, grinding, etc) without proper safety controls (welding blankets, fire extinguishers, etc).



Further information can be found under Publications on the CFA website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or Worksafe [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

# > Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are the most common form of fire safety equipment in buildings. They are provided within buildings to enable building occupants (employees or visitors) to attempt to extinguish a fire whilst it is still small. For a fire extinguisher to be effective, it is extremely important that the correct type of fire extinguisher is provided to match the risk that is present.

## Fire Extinguisher - Checklist

- ✓ Are there sufficient numbers of fire extinguishers?
- ✓ Are the fire extinguishers the correct type?
- ✓ Are they located appropriate to fire hazards?
- ✓ Have the fire extinguishers been appropriately maintained?
- ✓ Is there a maintenance tag attached to the fire extinguisher?
- ✓ Are the fire extinguishers accessible at all times & clear of all obstructions?
- ✓ Is the signage clear and visible from all approaches?
- ✓ Have all staff been trained in the use of fire extinguishers?



### How many and what type of fire extinguishers?

Australian Standard 2444\* "Portable Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets – Selection and Location" details the installation, required number and type of fire extinguishers that are to be provided within a building. In addition to the Australian Standard, the CFA website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) under 'Business & Industry' provides more detailed information for the community. It is important to note that fire extinguishers require regular maintenance to perform effectively.

### Where should the fire extinguishers be located?

AS 2444\* requires fire extinguishers to be located in a readily accessible position. Fire extinguishers shall not be located in positions where access could present a hazard to the potential user. Where practicable, extinguishers should be located along normal paths of travel and near exits.

### What signage am I required to provide?

Signage is required to enable building occupants to see where the fire extinguishers are located. This will allow occupants to quickly identify fire extinguishers in the event of a fire. AS 2444\* requires all signage to be clearly visible from up to 20 metres away in all directions of approach. In addition, signage must be installed no less than 2 metres above the floor level.

### Have all staff been trained in the use of fire extinguishers?

All occupants of buildings should be trained in fire awareness and the safe and effective use of all fire safety equipment – including fire extinguishers.

Further information can be found on the CFA website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au), Standards Australia website [www.sai-global.com](http://www.sai-global.com), and on the Fire Protection Association Australia website at [www.fpa.com.au](http://www.fpa.com.au).



\* - current Australian Standards as amended from time to time

# > Exit Signs & Emergency Lighting

Exit signs and emergency lighting are installed in buildings to assist occupants in the safe and efficient evacuation of buildings.

## Exit Sign & Emergency Lighting - Checklist

- ✓ Have the exit signs & emergency lighting been maintained in an operable condition?
- ✓ Is the view or identification of exit signs by occupants unobstructed?
- ✓ Will exit signs & emergency lights operate in the event of a power failure?
- ✓ Do exit signs provide adequate indication of the most direct exit route?



### Have the exit signs & emergency lighting been maintained in an operable condition?

Exit signs and emergency lighting should be regularly maintained as per the requirements of **AS/NZS 2293\* – Emergency escape lighting and exit signs for buildings – System design, installation and operation.**

### Is the view or identification of exit signs by occupants unobstructed?

Exit signs should be easily identified and unobstructed at all times. Common causes of obstruction may include floor stock, pallet racking, hanging of promotional materials, decorations, partitions and filing systems. These items should be removed or relocated. If permanent fixtures affect the view or identification of exit signs consideration should be given to installation of additional exit signs.

### Will exit signs & emergency lights operate in the event of a power failure?

The exit signs and emergency lighting should automatically illuminate during power failure to allow occupants to safely and efficiently exit the building. This is a primary function of this equipment.

### Do exit signs provide adequate direction indicating the most direct exit route?

Exit signage should provide direction to building occupants that is not confusing and indicates the most efficient route to an exit. A Building Surveyor or other suitably qualified person should be engaged to determine appropriate exit sign locations.

Further information can be found under Publications on the CFA website [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) and through the Standards Australia website [www.sai-global.com](http://www.sai-global.com).



\* - current Australian Standards as amended from time to time

# > Fire Hose Reels

Fire hose reels are installed within buildings to provide the building occupants with the capability to extinguish a fire. Fire hose reels are usually installed within buildings where the floor area exceeds 500m<sup>2</sup>. Fire hose reels are more beneficial than water type fire extinguishers as they provide a reliable water supply that allows the user to stand further from the fire.

## Fire Hose Reels - Checklist

- ✓ Are the operating instructions clear and legible ?
- ✓ If the fire hose reel is housed within a cabinet, is the cabinet free from other material?
- ✓ Is the fire hose reel accessible at all times?
- ✓ Is the cabinet provided with signage?
- ✓ Is the fire hose reel mounted correctly?
- ✓ Is the fire hose reel maintained correctly and provided with a maintenance tag?
- ✓ Have all staff been trained in the proper use of fire hose reels?



### Are the operating instructions clear and legible?

Fire hose reels are required to have clear operational instructions printed on the middle of the reel. If installed outdoors these instructions tend to weather and fade making them difficult to read. Occupants of the building should make themselves aware of the operation of the fire hose reel by reading these instructions.

### Is the fire hose reel accessible at all times?

Occupants should be able to access the fire hose reel at all times without having to remove obstructions such as stock, bins, or pallets. These obstructions may hinder opening the fire hose reel cabinet doors, which in turn may cause interference whilst trying to deploy the fire hose to a fire.

### Is the fire hose reel maintained correctly and provided with a maintenance tag?

Fire hose reels must have a maintenance tag to indicate servicing has been completed and maintained as per the requirements of AS 1851\* – Maintenance of Fire Safety Systems & Equipment.

### Have all staff been trained in the proper use of fire hose reels?

All occupants of buildings should be trained in fire awareness and the safe and effective use of all fire safety equipment – including fire hose reels.

Further information can be found through Standards Australia website [www.sai-global.com](http://www.sai-global.com).



\* - current Australian Standards as amended from time to time