



## NEW FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS FOR SHARED ACCOMMODATION BUILDINGS

Changes to building regulations in June 2005 introduced more stringent fire safety precautions for shared accommodation buildings in Victoria. The improved safety regulations are aimed at reducing the occurrence and severity of fire related injuries.

### What are the new laws?

Building regulation 710 of the *Building (Interim) Regulations 2005* requires Class 3 shared accommodation buildings to have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed **by 14 June 2008** or within six months of the sale of the building, whichever is earlier. The regulation only applies to buildings constructed (or for which a building permit was issued) **before** 1 July 2003, as buildings constructed after this date are already required to include provision of this system.

### Who do the laws affect?

If you are the owner of any type of shared accommodation building listed below these regulations **may** apply to **you**:

- |                                      |  |   |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel       | <input type="checkbox"/> Backpackers   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hostel         | <input type="checkbox"/> Chalet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guest house | <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging-house | <input type="checkbox"/> Boarding house |                                 |

Shared accommodation buildings include:

- A sole occupancy unit which is a room or suite of rooms which includes sleeping facilities capable of accommodating three or more persons, or
- Buildings with sleeping facilities capable of accommodating thirteen or more persons.

### Are there any exemptions?

Exemptions exist where:

- The building is not more than two storeys high **and** where each sole-occupancy unit (SOU) has access to at least two exits **and** the distance of travel from the entrance doorway (of the SOU) to the nearest exit is 7.5 metres or less
- The building is not more than two storeys high **and** each SOU has its own direct access to a road or open space
- The building already has an approved fire sprinkler system installed.

### When do the laws start?

The regulation was introduced on 14 June 2005. Owners **must** comply with the new regulation **by 14 June 2008** or within six months of the sale of building, whichever is earlier. Failure by the owner to comply with the regulation will result in enforcement action that may include fines and/or prosecution.

### What do I need to do?

To comply with the new regulation you must have an automatic fire sprinkler system that complies with the *Australian Standards AS 2118.1-1999* or *AS 2118.4-1995*.

### Useful contacts

For assistance in complying with the regulations you should contact your municipal building surveyor at your local council or a private building surveyor in the first instance. For queries regarding fire safety precautions, contact the Country Fire Authority on 03 9262 8444 or the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board on 03 9665 4478.

An initiative supported by Victoria's fire services

