

Deleting hose from existing fire hydrants

This updates the previous *Practice Note 2005-31* issued June 2005.

1. Summary

When considering removal of fire hoses and other associated equipment from existing fire hydrants, the relevant building surveyor (RBS) must be satisfied that regulatory procedures and criteria have been met. Building height, location (where rural) and the presence or absence of a complying sprinkler system and fire hose reels, should all be taken into account. Where compliance or safety concerns exist, then the written report and consent from the Chief Officer of the relevant fire protection authority should be obtained by the RBS before deleting a required hydrant hose and associated equipment.

2. Background

Adoption of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) 1990 (which includes AS 2419.1) removed the previous requirement for a 38 mm hose, 12mm nozzle and appropriate fittings to be provided at a hydrant. This provision was transposed into BCA, deemed-to-satisfy provision. Hydrants installed after the introduction of the BCA are not required to be equipped with hoses. This reflects current practice, where fire authorities usually prefer to use their own hoses in a fire situation. Fire hose requirements may still apply prior to the introduction of BCA.

3. Procedures

The building owner applies for a building (demolition) permit for the deletion of a required hydrant hose and other associated equipment. If other building work requiring a building permit is planned, hose removal may be included in the application.

Certain matters should be taken into account by the RBS when deciding an application for a permit. It may not be appropriate to allow deletion of a required hydrant hose and other associated equipment. In other circumstances, conditions may need to be applied to the permit, or advice obtained in writing from the Chief Officer of the relevant fire protection authority.

4. Buildings over 4 storeys

In a building with a rise in storeys greater than 4, the removal of a required hydrant hose and other associated equipment should only be permitted if a complying sprinkler system and fire hose reels are installed throughout the building. Where a building does not have a complying sprinkler system and fire hose reels, the report and consent should be obtained in writing from the Chief Officer.

5. Buildings of 4 storeys or less

The RBS may permit removal of a required hydrant hose and other associated equipment in buildings that are of 4 storeys or less, provided they have a complying sprinkler system installed throughout.

In non-sprinklered buildings with a rise in storeys of 4 or less, equipped hydrants may have been required for use by both building occupants and fire authorities. Removing a required hydrant hose and other associated equipment may be considered, provided complying fire hose reels are installed throughout. The written report and consent of the Chief Officer should be sought where a building does not have complying fire hose reels.

Where a non-sprinklered building is located within a Country Fire Authority (CFA) region, the written report and consent of the Chief Officer should be sought, even if the building has complying fire hose reels. Arrival time of firefighting appliances can be greater in CFA regions. Community members who are trained firefighters may be capable of using an equipped hydrant in this situation.

6. Dangerous goods

Chemical and industrial complexes handle and store quantities of dangerous goods. Equipped hydrants may be required by the relevant fire protection authority, under the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2000. In certain circumstances, those regulations require referral of occupancies with dangerous goods in excess of limits specified in those regulations to the Chief Officer.

Hydrant hoses should not be deleted via the building permit process in buildings with a dangerous goods in excess of limits specified in the dangerous goods regulations, without a referral being made to the Chief Officer.

7. Signage

If a hydrant hose is removed, signage should be updated. For example, signs indicating “**Fire Hydrant and Hose**” should have the words “**and Hose**” removed.

If you have further queries regarding the information above, call the Technical and Research Services Branch at the Building Commission on 1300 360 380.