

Essential Safety Measures: Information Sheet



*South Gippsland
Shire Council*

What are Essential Safety Measures?

Essential Safety Measures (ESMs) are the safety features required in a building to protect occupants in the event of fire or other emergency. They can provide occupants with more time to exit the building and reduce the chance of fire spreading.

Different buildings require different ESMs depending on their use and size.

Common ESMs include:

- Fire extinguishers and identification signage;
- Fire hose reels and identification signage;
- Sprinkler systems;
- Fire hydrants and identification signage;
- Emergency lighting;
- Exit lighting;
- Fire alarm systems.

Other ESMs which are less obvious at first glance include:

- Compliant emergency exits & doors;
- Clear paths of travel to exits;
- Fire rated walls;
- Fire and smoke doors;
- Air handling systems (smoke reduction);
- and more.



ESM Maintenance

All ESMs need to be maintained. The building Occupancy Permit details what maintenance is required and how often it needs to be done.

Many commercial building owners and tenants engage contractors who specialise in ESM maintenance and recording.

Obligations of commercial building owners

Building Owners (or Owners Corporations) are responsible for regularly maintaining a building's ESMs in accordance with the maintenance schedule, which forms part of the building Occupancy Permit. All ESM maintenance must be recorded (see below).

The Occupancy Permit must be displayed in a prominent location in all commercial buildings.

It is possible to transfer ESM maintenance responsibilities to a building occupant if it is specified within the lease agreement.

Reporting Obligations

Owners must record all ESM maintenance and prepare an Annual Essential Safety Measures report (AESMR). Failing to prepare an AESMR or failing to make it available to Council's Municipal Building Surveyor upon request, is an offence.

What is Council's involvement?

Council is empowered under the *Building Act 1993* and the *Building Regulations 2018* to inspect and enforce the provision and maintenance of ESMs.

Non-Compliance

ESMs are required to keep building occupants and the community safe. If Council becomes aware that the ESMs in your building are not compliant, we will engage with you and provide advice to assist you voluntarily bringing them up to the required standard.

In circumstances where voluntary compliance cannot be achieved, Council will initiate formal enforcement actions, which may include:

- Issuing infringement notices (fines).
- Issuing Building Notices or Building Orders which require you to undertake specified work.
- In extreme circumstances Council may prohibit occupation of the building and/or undertake prosecution in a Magistrates Court.

It is an offence to remove or alter ESMs without a building permit having been issued for that work.

Resources

- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
[Essential Safety Measures Fact Sheet](#)
- Victorian Building Authority (VBA)
[Essential Safety Measures](#)
- Private Registered Building Surveyors
A list of private registered building surveyors is available at –
[Building Forms](#)

Need Advice? Contact Us

For more information, please contact Council's Building team on 03 5662 9200 or via email at council@southgippsland.vic.gov.au

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