

BUILDING ADVISORY SERVICES BRANCH

BUILDING NOTE

Contact Officer: Peter Zagorski

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AMENDMENTS TO BCA2006

Amendments to the BCA (BCA 2006) commenced in the Northern Territory on 1 May 2006. The revised energy efficiency requirements for class 1 buildings (the five star standard) and the energy efficiency requirements for 5 to 9 buildings **have not been adopted** by the Northern Territory. The current provisions in BCA 2005 will still apply to Class 1 and 10 buildings.

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. This replaces the current Northern Territory 10,000 cycle roof testing regime. The amendment provides a nationally consistent test that will encourage manufacturers to develop efficient building products and reduce testing costs with one uniform test. NT addition to Specification B1.2 and clause 3.10.10 (f) has been amended to allow for both former (10,000 cycle) and new testing methods to be used.

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

Five star energy efficiency provisions for houses

The NT Building Advisory Committee raised a number of concerns regarding the impact the proposed five star housing provisions would have on some forms of housing construction in the Northern Territory. In particular, concerns were raised about the impact of the provisions on concrete block houses, and houses that are appropriately designed for the climate. It also expressed concern that, in the absence of the option of verification methods and a suitable rating tool, the measures may not be practical in the tropics.

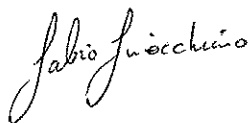
The Northern Territory has delayed any adoption of five star housing and the energy efficiency requirements in class 5-9 until these matters have been adequately addressed. For this reason, the Northern Territory has **not** increased the stringency of energy efficient housing to five stars which came into effect on 1 May 2006. The current BCA 2005 provisions will therefore continue to apply in the Northern Territory until further notice.

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.



Fabio Finocchiaro
Director, Building Control