



Understanding Commercial Property Fire Safety

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



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Understanding Commercial Property Fire Safety: What You Need to Know!

Have you noticed a drastic increase in the cost of keeping your building Fire Safety compliant?

You're not alone!

Recent legislative changes have meant that Annual Fire Safety Statements (AFSS) now need to be issued by a qualified APFS (Accredited Practitioner – Fire Safety). Here are some key points on owner's responsibilities and the standards that should be followed when it comes to compliance for their commercial property.

- Australian Standard AS1851:2012 is a baseline that most AFSP's use to ensure continuity of service. It provides structure to service processes and a level of assurance to service technicians, service companies, property/facility managers, and property owners that Essential Fire Safety Measures are routinely inspected to a standard.
- From June 2024 servicing in accordance with AS1851:2012 will become mandatory and all service technicians will be required to have completed an accreditation in Fire Safety Inspection and Testing.
- Many insurers require that Essential Fire Safety Measures are installed and routinely inspected "to Australian Standards".
- The Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation (Division 6 – Fire Safety Maintenance) refers to how fire safety maintenance is required, by regulation, in circumstances where either a fire safety schedule exists, or does not exist. In both cases, the regulation is that essential fire safety measures are maintained, in the first instance to the standard outlined on the fire safety schedule, and in the absence of a schedule maintained to no less than the standard to which the installed system was designed.
- It is ultimately the building owner's responsibility to ensure routine maintenance is undertaken on essential fire safety measures.
- All developed sites require an Annual Fire Safety Statement, and as such an APFS inspector is required to inspect and confirm that essential fire safety measures exist and are maintained to a point that they will operate as designed.

So, what does this mean for your commercial property?

As an owner you are required annually to submit a completed Annual Fire Safety Statement to Tamworth Regional Council (TRC), NSW Fire + Rescue, and to all tenants of the building (to be displayed in each individual tenancy). For a certifier to sign off on this and to ensure that a property complies, you will need to adhere to the following:

1. Biannual inspection and servicing of fire safety equipment, carried out by a technician with accreditation in Fire Safety Inspection and Testing.
2. Annual AFSS inspections carried out by an APFS.

On top of the expense of the biannual inspections and any rectification of defects (for example, replacement of an expired fire extinguisher), there will be an invoice for the issue of AFSS from the technician, and a fee may also be payable to TRC.

All compliance information required by TRC, including how to lodge your Annual Fire Safety Statement can be found here:

[Fire Safety | Tamworth Regional Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Unfortunately, these increased regulations come at an expense for a building owner, but it will be a small price to pay if helps protect the building or more importantly, save lives.

It's important to note that for investors that the expense is something that can be passed on to a Lessee, and it's something that can be negotiated into any new Commercial or Retail lease.



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