

Communication pillars in buildings

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1 PURPOSE

This interim guideline provides industry with Fire Rescue Victoria's (FRV) rationale for the installation of communication pillars. Communication pillars are used by attending fire service personnel to establish a communications and services link between a building, including major community infrastructure, and FRV's Mobile Control Unit, which is where incident control activities are principally undertaken and managed.

2 SCOPE

This interim guideline is applicable to all buildings that are situated within FRV's fire districts that are required by Clause E1D15 of the National Construction Code 2022 – Volume 1 (NCC), to be provided with a fire control centre.

3 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions will apply.

Building: The term “building” maintains the same definition as Section 3 of the *Building Act 1993*, however it also encompasses major community infrastructure such as road tunnels, rail tunnels and subterranean transport terminals.

4 BACKGROUND

Clause E1D15 of the NCC requires a fire control centre facility to be provided for—

- (a) All buildings with an effective height of more than 25m; and
- (b) A Class 6, 7, 8 or 9 building with a total floor area more than 18,000m².

Specification 19 of the NCC prescribes the construction and contents required for fire control centres and rooms.

FRV's operational personnel use the facilities of the fire control centre on attendance of an incident at the building

In a fire or emergency situation, in large buildings with significant numbers of people, fire ground command and control activities are coordinated through FRV's Mobile Control Unit. This unit is also the location where other emergency services and support agencies liaise to ensure all emergency response activities are effectively coordinated. The control of fires or emergencies relies heavily on effective communication, which links all key functional activities. Radio channels can quickly become clogged or become inoperative in certain buildings. Consequently, the hard-wired links contained within the building that interface with the fire control centre, provide a very effective and reliable means of communication.

5 REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNICATIONS PILLARS

To facilitate the communication and service link requirements between a building's fire control centre and FRV's Mobile Control Unit, the installation of a communications pillar that is provided with the following features is expected.

- (a) A hard-wired communication link must exist between the fire control centre and the communications pillar. The wiring link is to comprise of a bonded 2 pair cable of 0.75mm gauge that is wired direct from the Fire Control Room to the communications pillar;
- (b) A 240V AC power supply is to be provided at the communications pillar via a 15-Amp circuit. A 240V general purpose power outlet must exist at the pillar;
- (c) Where the building is provided with an Emergency Telephone System (ETS), an ETS telephone jacking point is required;
- (d) An RJ11 of 610 telephone socket is to be provided at the communications pillar. Which facilitates the use of a standard analogue telephone handset;
- (e) The communications pillar is to be situated within a location or a position that is approved by FRV, noting that concurrent approval from other authorities or agencies may be necessary where the communications pillar is proposed to be situated outside of the building's property boundaries;
- (f) The communications pillar is to contain closed circuit television (CCTV) jacking points, where CCTV is (or proposed to be) installed;
- (g) The communications pillar to be a standard "Telstra Pillar" that is accessible keyed to the FRV approved locking device with the required isolation between 240V AC power supply and telecommunications, as detailed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority; and
- (h) Provided with a locking mechanism that is operable with a fire brigade no. 003 key cut lockⁱ.

6 ADDITIONAL FIRE CONTROL CENTRE SPECIFICATIONS

Whilst not directly identified within Clause S19C3 of Specification 19 of the NCC, FRV requires a standard analogue telephone handset (Australian Communications Authority approved) to be provided, which is connected to a RJIII socket or a 610 socket.

ⁱ 225 Contract Series Padlocks and key cut to Serial Number 225/40/119/003 Lockwood specification meets this specific requirement.