



Policy

Fire Safety Measures in Licensed Premises

Disclaimer

This Policy is designed to provide information in regard to the subject matter covered, and with the understanding that the Director of Liquor Licensing is not passing legal opinion or interpretation or other professional advice. The information is provided on the understanding that all persons undertake responsibility for assessing the relevance and accuracy of its contents.

Introduction

This policy has been developed to provide a set of minimum fire safety measures for licensed premises. The policy describes the minimum fire safety and evacuation measures which are considered necessary to limit injury and loss of life in an emergency.

Purpose of Policy

It is important that licensees ensure their premises are safe, including during an emergency situation. Patrons, guests and staff have a reasonable expectation that should an emergency situation arise, they will be provided with sufficient warning of the emergency and will not encounter barriers whilst evacuating. Appropriate warning and safe exit pathways are vital to minimise injury or death.

Accommodation as part of a licensed premises can present additional challenges in an emergency, as patrons may not be familiar with their surroundings, may have consumed alcohol and may be in a relaxed state/asleep. Clear guidelines and facilities for warning and evacuation are therefore important so that patrons can be prepared in case of an emergency.

With regard to fire, most people are injured or killed not due to the fire itself, but due to the effects of smoke inhalation and the impact smoke has on their ability to safely exit the building. Smoke alarms provide for early detection and warning of the fire whilst emergency lighting allows patrons to safely make their way to dedicated and operational emergency exits. These exits should be well placed and easily located to aid the quick and orderly escape of persons from the building.

The construction and age of a licensed premises can also have an impact on the potential risk. Generally, older style, multi-storey hotel buildings with wood floors and walls will pose more of a risk than newer buildings with a concrete, steel or masonry construction. Newer premises are also more likely to have been required to include rigorous fire safety control measures during construction than older hotels.

Legislative Provisions

New buildings are subject to the requirements of the *Building Act 2011* and the *Building Regulations 2012*. The National Construction Code series (NCC) sets out the minimum requirements for the design, construction and performance of buildings throughout Australia. Licensees may be required to upgrade their fire and evacuation standards to current NCC standards as part of any substantial alterations made to the licensed premises through a development or building licence approval process.

Section 99(1)(a) of the *Liquor Control Act 1988* (the Act) requires licensees to “*maintain the licensed premises at a standard that is reasonable having regard to the class of licence, the locality and expectations of the public.*” In this regard, the department’s inspectors may impose work orders under section 99(2) of the Act requiring that fire safety measures be adopted.

The purpose of the policy is not to require older premises to comply with the current requirements of the NCC (such as the need to have fire control panels, fire hose reels/sprinklers and smoke extraction systems). Rather, the minimum safety measures outlined in this policy will assist all premises to meet the safety intent of the NCC and the reasonable expectations of the public, regardless of the age of the premises.

Minimum Safety Measures

The following have been identified as the basic fire safety and evacuation measures that can be reasonably expected of most licensed premises in Western Australia. What is considered reasonable will depend on factors such as the age and construction materials of the building. The application and implementation of some fire safety measures may be varied by negotiation with departmental inspectors in circumstances where the implementation of the safety measures described below are not possible or practical due to the age or construction of the premises, but the safety outcome intended by the implementation of the safety measure can be achieved through an acceptable alternative mechanism.

1. Emergency Exits

- Emergency exits and paths of egress to be unobstructed.
- Hard wired battery backup emergency exit signs, including directional signs, are correctly located and visible.
- Emergency exit doors to open outwards.
- Exit doors are to be operational using a single downward or pushing action and able to be opened without the use of a key or lock.

2. Emergency Lighting

- Emergency lighting with hard wired battery backup and adequate lighting intensity (Lux) provided to allow patrons to follow an exit path.

3. Evacuation Plan

- An emergency evacuation plan must be displayed in each room.
- An evacuation management plan, for the use of staff and management, should detail measures such as the designated external muster point, evacuation procedure and head counts/accounting for all staff, patrons and guests.

4. Core Doors

- Solid core doors with self closing devices should be fitted to each accommodation unit. These will aid in keeping a fire isolated for as long as possible within a room and to prevent open doors becoming an obstruction to patrons attempting to exit the building.

5. Smoke Alarms

- Hard wired 240 volt smoke detectors should be provided in each accommodation room and throughout all areas of the building.
- Smoke alarms should be interconnected so that when one smoke alarm triggers, all alarms trigger.

6. Fire Extinguishers

- Fire extinguishers (both water and, where required, dry powder and/or carbon dioxide) should be provided.
- Extinguishers are to be inspected at least once every six months and serviced at least once every twelve months.
- Extinguishers to be correctly sign posted, tagged and always in an operational state and location.

7. Fire Blankets

- Fire blankets to be provided in kitchen food preparation areas.
- Fire blankets to be inspected and serviced annually.

8. Secondary Exits

- All windows, doors, balconies and external stairways are to be fully operational as they may be required as secondary fire exits if dedicated exits can not be accessed.

9. Electrical

- Electrical wiring and appliances should be checked regularly for safety by a suitably qualified person.
- It is highly recommended that residual current devices (RCDs) are installed.

10. Obstructions

- Premises should not be so cluttered that they prevent safe exit from the building.