



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Mission Resourcing Unit

Property Services

# Essential Safety Measures

## Consolidated presentation

*Property Services September 9, 2021*

# ESM presentation overview

1. Why do we need Essential Fire Safety Measures ?
2. What are ESMs?
3. What buildings do ESMs apply to?
4. ESMs and OHS
5. Why are Church Councils responsible for ESMs?
6. What must we do?
7. How do we start?
8. Self-guided pathway
9. Further support
10. In future
11. Contractors

Note – we use *ESM* as shorthand for *Essential Fire Safety Measures* as they are known in NSW



# Why do we need Essential Fire Safety Measures?

For the preservation of people and life.

# Why do we need Essential Fire Safety Measures?

- They are the safety features required in a building to protect occupants in the event of a fire or emergency.
- First line of defence in an emergency.
- And, yes, we have had fires in UCA buildings.



# What is an ESM?

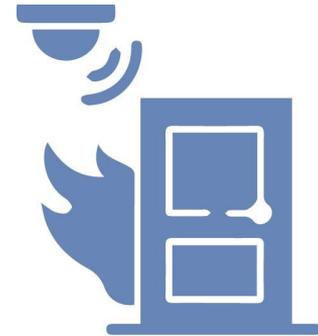
The term “Essential Fire Safety Measure” is defined in the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* and includes items of equipment, forms of construction or fire safety strategies that are provided in a building to ensure the safety of persons using the building in the event of fire.



Exit signs



Fire extinguishers



Smoke alarms

# What is an ESM?



ESMs include fire safety systems installed to protect building occupants.



They also include exit doors, emergency lighting, exit signs and fire hydrants.



Adequate maintenance will ensure ESMs operate reliably if an emergency arises.

# What is an ESM?



Non-compliance puts occupants, passers-by occupants and adjoining buildings at risk.



Non-compliance may result in fines.

# Essential Safety Measures

- Mandated by federal and state Acts/regulations (the law).
- ESMs are determined by a Registered Building Surveyor.
- Compliance ensures safe building egress (**getting people out**) and operational fire-fighting capability at the time of need.



# Essential Safety Measures

- Each building has its own unique list of ESM items - unique by type, quantity, installation and level of servicing.
- ESMs include other items which have been determined by the Registered Building Surveyor as an ESM (e.g. as a result of an alternative solution). Such additions will be listed on the building's Occupation Certificate and/or Maintenance Determination.
- ESMs are to be maintained regardless of whether a building is occupied or unoccupied, eg lockdowns. An increased risk of fire can occur in an unoccupied building – testing ESMs is an essential service.



## What buildings do ESMs apply to?

ESMs apply to commercial and public buildings.

# Class 9

## Public buildings - includes three sub-classifications:

- Class 9a - healthcare buildings such as hospitals and day clinics.
- Class 9b - buildings where people assemble for social, political, theatrical, religious or civic purposes, e.g schools, universities, sports facilities, night clubs.
- Class 9c - aged care facilities.



# Class 6

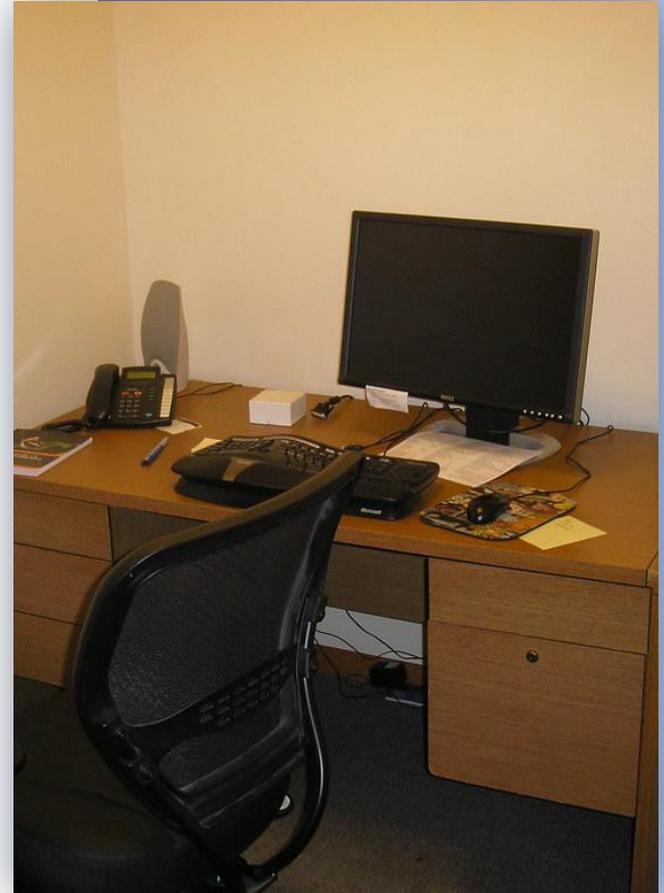
**Buildings where retail goods are sold or services are supplied to the public, such as shops or restaurants. This class may include:**

- Hairdressing salon.
- Public laundry.
- Shopping centre.
- Funeral parlour.
- Showroom.



# What buildings do ESMs apply to?

- Essential safety measures apply to all buildings other than a house or outbuilding. Building Classifications are under the National Construction Code.
- They do not normally apply to a manse unless the house is not being used as a place of residence, e.g. office, medical rooms.



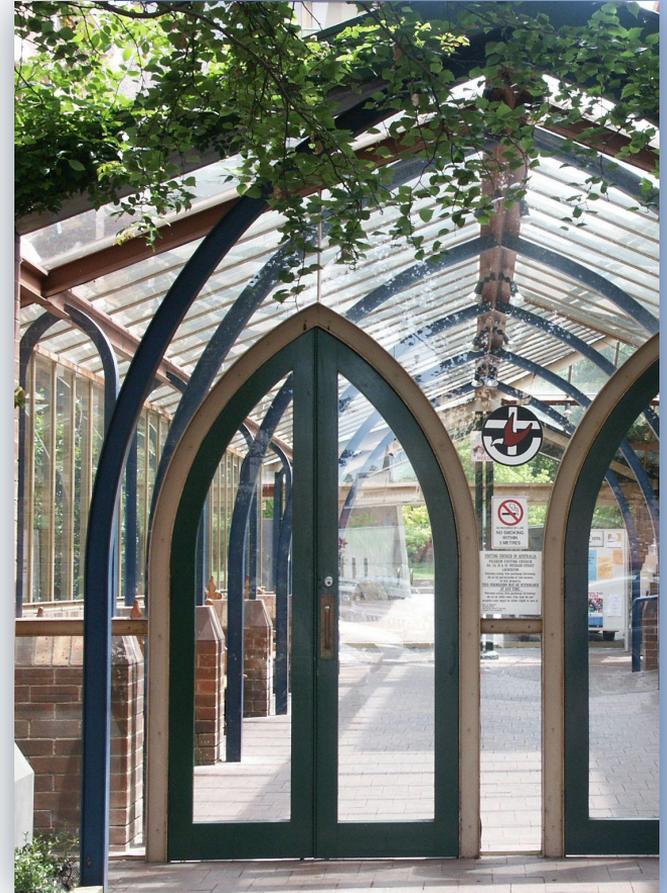
# Why are Church Councils responsible for ESMs?

## *UCA Regulations and Responsible Body*

- Responsible body means any body of the Church to which specific responsibilities are assigned by the Constitution or by any UCA Regulation, bylaw or rule;
- **4.1** Responsible body means a body that is responsible for the management and administration of property, and which either itself carries out those responsibilities or appoints another body to undertake them either in whole or in part;

# Why are Church Councils responsible for ESMs?

- **4.4.1** Subject to the UCA regulations, the by-laws of the Synod and the rules of Presbytery, the Church Council shall be responsible for the management and administration of all Church property acquired or held for the use of the congregation.





## We already do OHS. Is this the same as ESM?

ESM and OHS are not the same, but both support the protection of people in buildings.

# We already do OHS. Is this the same as ESM?

- ESMs are installations, fixtures and fittings in a building that support people in an emergency evacuation.
- OHS relates to anything that may cause injury or harm and has a strong focus on how we use a building or workplace
- ESMs and OHS come under different legislation.



**The OHS Act seeks to protect the health, safety and welfare of persons in a workplace. It also aims to ensure that the health and safety of the public is not put at risk by work activities. Churches, halls, shops and kindergartens are all workplaces.**

# We already do OHS. Is this the same as ESM?

- Continuous access to exits and paths of travel in the event of an emergency is a requirement under both OHS legislation and the NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations.
- “Test and tag” of portable electrical items is under OHS legislation as an action in helping make a workplace safe.

## WHAT WE MUST DO: OVERVIEW

# Owner's responsibilities

- Maintain each essential fire safety measure to the required minimum standard of performance contained in the fire safety schedule.
- Ensure ESMs have been inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the Fire Safety Schedule and by accredited practitioners (fire safety).
- Maintenance records must be kept and made available.
- This includes a record of rectification of deficiencies.
- Prepare the Annual Fire Safety Statement (**AFSS**) and lodge with Council and Fire Commissioner.

## WHAT WE MUST DO: OVERVIEW

# Occupier's responsibilities

(the TENANT if the property is RENTED)

- Responsible for continuous access to exits and paths of travel prepared for an emergency.
- Ensure no interference with the ESMs.
- Legal advice should be sought if considering passing the costs of maintaining ESMs as an outgoing cost to the tenant as per Disclosure Statement for a Retail Lease.
- Note that the owner (in the UCA the Church Council as the Responsible body) remains responsible for ESMs.

# What we must do? Overview pathways

There are two distinct pathways in setting up your ESM program:

## Fire Safety Certificate

Testing your ESMs in accordance with the Fire Safety Schedule from your Fire Safety Certificate.

OR

## Maintenance determination

Testing your ESMs in accordance with the Fire Safety Schedule from your Maintenance Determination.

# Step 1

## ESM Fire Safety Schedule from Fire Safety Certificate

- For buildings built after July 1, 1988: display your Fire Safety Certificate and Schedule in the foyer of the building.
- A Fire Safety Certificate is a document issued by or on behalf of the building owner(s) upon the completion of new building work. It confirms that each fire safety measure that applies to a building (per the fire safety schedule) has been installed and checked by a properly qualified person. This helps verify that the required fire safety measures can perform to the minimum standard.
- A Fire Safety Certificate issued after July 1, 1988 will specify the ESMs and their required fire safety schedule.

# Or Step 1

## ESM Fire Safety Schedule from Maintenance Determination

- For buildings built before July 1, 1988 where no upgrades have been undertaken:
- Obtain a Maintenance Determination from a Registered Building Surveyor who will determine your ESM Fire Safety Schedule.
- A Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule sets out the required minimum standard of performance for each fire safety measure and the maintenance requirements for the ESMs that are present.

# Step 2

## Maintain your ESMs according to ESM Fire Safety Schedule with works carried out by Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety)

- Install and maintain the equipment for testing of ESMs in accordance with your Fire Safety Schedule.
- By law an Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety) must be engaged for the testing, repair and replacement of ESMs. Note Statcom Systems verify the accreditation of the practitioner, but do not perform the testing or maintenance.
- Keep records in a log book of all ESMs maintenance and repair work.

# Step 3

## Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS)

- On the anniversary of the Fire Safety Certificate/Fire Safety Schedule OR the last Annual Fire Safety Statement, prepare an Annual Fire Safety Statement.
- 12 months' evidence of testing by Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety) is required to complete an AFSS and there must be no outstanding compliance items. The AFSS must be in the prescribed form.

# AFSS sign-off

- Property Services recommends the engagement of a contractor (such as Statcom Systems) for the sign off of the AFSS, a legal document, as they have the required experience and they will verify maintenance has been completed by an Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety). The AFSS does not need to be signed by a Registered Building Surveyor and cannot be signed by the Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety) involved in the assessment of any of the measures.
- An AFSS is signed off where each essential fire safety measure has been assessed by an Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety) and is performing to the standard outlined in the Fire Safety Schedule.

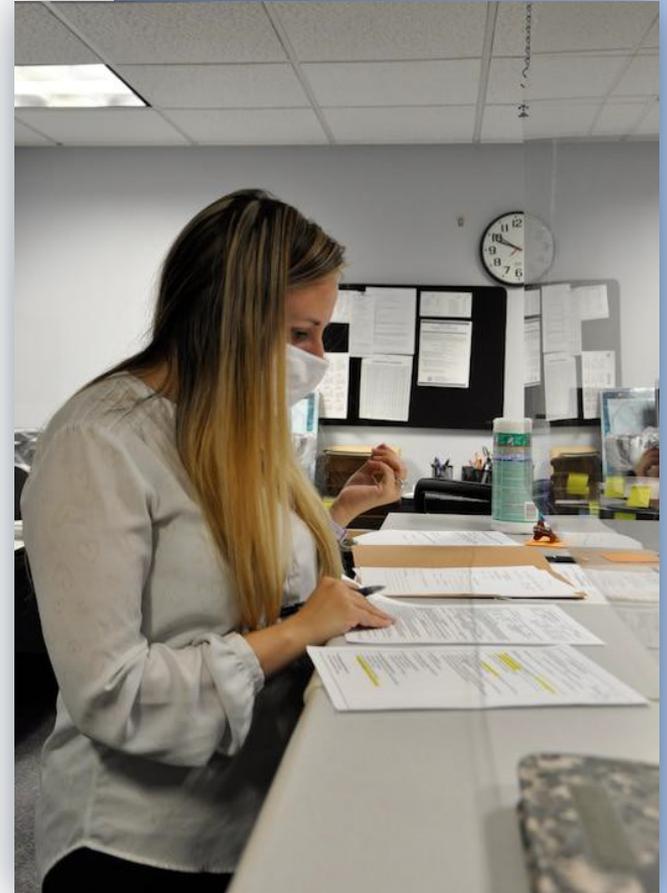
# Step 4

## Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS) Submission to Council and Fire and Rescue NSW

- Annually lodge your AFSS and Fire safety Schedule with your Local Council and the the Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) [afss@fire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:afss@fire.nsw.gov.au)
- Where Statcom System have been engaged for sign off of your AFSS they will lodge this on your behalf.
- A copy of the AFSS and Fire Safety Schedule should be displayed in the foyer of your building.

# How do we start? ESM self-guided process

- Refer to the Property Services letter and information sent to your Church Council and this document.
- All available on Property Services website.
- See “Forms & Resources”.
- See “Key Information Sheets”.





# Early preparation

Getting organised

# Gather building-related documents that you may already have

- Building Occupation Certificate and Fire Safety Certificate.
- Building permits/final inspection certificates.
- Planning permits relating to change of use.
- Major works documents.
- Building maintenance documentation.
- ESM servicing and repair documentation.

# Clear the way. Check points of exit

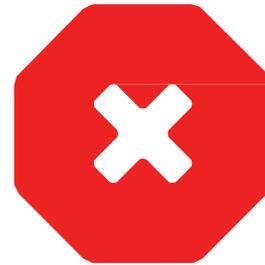
- All paths of travel toward emergency exit doors are free from obstructions.
- Emergency exit doors free from obstruction, can swing fully open.
- External discharge paths are not obstructed by vegetation or stored items and do not lead into locked off areas.
- Paths of travel, location of exit signs and the emergency evacuation diagram must all be consistent.

If the building was built or significantly altered after July 1, 1988, do you have the Fire Safety Certificate?



**YES**

Go to next stage.



**NO**

Follow these steps:

# To find your Fire Safety Certificate

Contact local municipal council office (building department) for a copy of all building permits, occupancy certificate and fire safety certificate

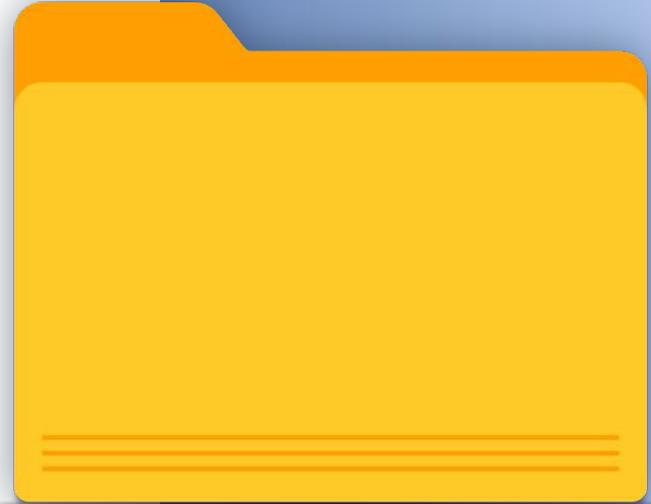
You may need:

- to pay a fee for this service.
- a signed letter from Synod office authorising retrieval (see ESM Info pack sent to Church Councils). A further letter may be needed where legal ownership is with the NSW UCA Property Trust.

Retrieval from municipal council office usually electronic – email or download.

# Display the Fire Safety Certificate and Schedule

- Display a copy of the Fire Safety Certificate and Schedule on the wall in clear view near the main entrance (eg church foyer).
- Keep a printed copy of the Fire Safety Certificate and Schedule with the Church Council's property records, and safely store the electronic copy. Send a copy to Property Services.



# Do you have a Maintenance Determination?

## Yes?

- Place a copy of your Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule with your Church Council's property records and have this available for reference for all ESM contractors and authority inspectors.
- Display your Fire Safety Schedule.
- Send a copy to Property Services.



## Do you have a Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule? No (built pre-July 1, 1988)

- Obtain quotes for a Registered Building Surveyor to complete a Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule. Property Services can assist with quote collation and comparison.
- Engage a Registered Building Surveyor to visit your church property to prepare a Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule and advise if ESM modifications are required.
- Place a copy of the Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule with your Church Council's property records. Send a copy to Property Services. Display them as required in the property.

# Do you require ESM upgrades or improvements?

This can only be determined for the unique building on the inspection and advice of a Registered Building Surveyor (RBS). Do not commence upgrades without RBS advice. You will be required to provide the RBS advice to Accredited practitioners (fire safety) contractors to enable them to make the modifications or improvements.

- Emergency lighting and exit signage
- Fire extinguisher, fire blanket and Hose reel
- Fire hydrant
- Evacuation diagram
- Fire doors or emergency exit doors
- Smoke or heat detection
- Fire input panel

# Evacuation diagrams

- Updated every five years or when building improvements are made.
- Comply to Australian Standards and include “You are here” location.
- ESM equipment locations and evacuation pathway must be displayed correctly on the evacuation diagram.
- Printed in full colour at A3 size, be specific to the location in a building and include date of revision.
- Recommend engaging contractor (eg Statcom Systems) to ensure compliance with Australian Standard 3745.

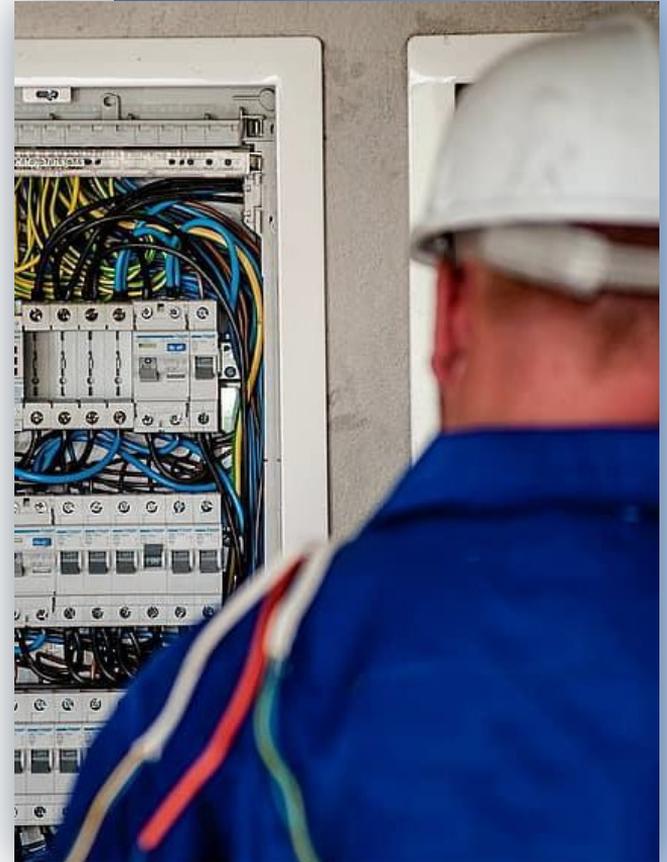
# Set up ESM Maintenance routine with Registered Electrical Contractor - accredited practitioner (fire safety)

- ESM testing and inspections such as installed emergency lights, illuminated directional signs and illuminated exit signs. Frequency of testing per Fire Safety Schedule.
- REC supply an ESM electrical testing logbook to be completed and signed.
- Suggest Electrical Safety standards checks, including switchboards, can be completed when REC is on site for ESM testing.

# Best practice suggestions

- Keep building electrically safe and have your electrician perform safety switch (RCD) and earth circuit tests regularly.
- Conduct general switchboard safety inspection, all GPOs and switch plates.
- Have your REC conduct an annual Infrared Thermography of the switchboard under load.

*Note these best practice items are not a requirement of the ESM or the AFSS.*



# Set up ESM Maintenance routine with Fire Services Contractor - accredited practitioner (fire safety)

- Frequency of inspections as directed by the Fire Safety Schedule, for all installed fire safety measures such as extinguishers, fire reel hoses, fire hydrants, smoke and heat detection, fire or smoke doors, etc.
- If you do not have a preferred contractor, obtain more than one quote from contractor such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chubb, Wormald, FES.
- Have your Fire Services Contractor supply an ESM inspection and testing logbook. Ensure the logbook is completed and signed by the Fire Services Contractor - accredited practitioner (fire safety).

# Best practice tips for Fire Safety ESMs

- Do not furnish near or around fire extinguishers and their signage. Furniture can move and block access or visibility.
- Do not permit shelving, furniture or storage to be placed directly under a sprinkler head.
- Always allow a clearance of 1m between the sprinkler head and stored items.



# Set up ESM monitoring and audit

- Notify Presbytery of intention to start ESM compliance program and pathway chosen.
- Presbytery encourages all congregations to use the services of Statcom Systems.
- Engage Statcom Systems or your chosen contractor to undertake ESM monitoring.
- Only a Registered Building Surveyor can determine the ESMs for a building.

# Statcom Systems can:

- Conduct quarterly visits to church property and inspect ESM testing records of fire services and electrical contractors have been completed in accordance with the ESM Schedule and Australian Standards and by accredited practitioners (fire safety).
- Check contractors have recorded maintenance and inspections into logbook. Any incomplete or outstanding tasks will be alerted to the contractor and the congregation via the Statcom Systems automated email system.

# Statcom Systems can:

- Prepare log books at their first visit and provide observation report. Note only begin upgrades to ESMs on the advice of Registered Building Surveyor.
- Verify ESM contractors are accredited practitioners (fire safety) as required by law.
- Sign off on AFSS and lodge with Council and Fire Commissioner on your behalf.



# Red cabinet on the wall

- Recommend all UCA properties should have a red ESM cabinet affixed to the wall near to the main entrance.
- The cabinet is the central repository for all ESM logbooks. You will have multiple logbooks (electrician, fire services contractor) as well as the Statcom Systems summary logbook.
- Liaise with Property Services or Stacom Systems regarding the number and placement of red cabinets for complex sites (if applicable).

# Red cabinet best practice

- Logbooks need to be available for inspection upon request of the Fire Brigade or Municipal Council.
- Makes it easy for contractors to locate and update logbooks.
- ESM cabinets can be purchased from your nearest safety suppliers retailer (eg RSEA, Seton, SafetyQuip) but ensure the cabinet is fit for purpose (holes for fixing to wall and depth for quantity of log books).
- Recommend Statcom Systems supply and install for convenience.

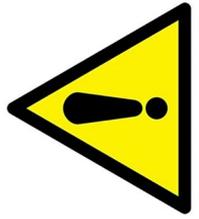
# Who is permitted to undertake ESM works?

- Only qualified accredited practitioner (fire safety) contractors should undertake repairs to ESM fixtures, fittings and equipment.
- Your local handyman, domestic builder or domestic plumber are **NOT** permitted to undertake repairs if they do not hold the appropriate licence or accreditation to perform those repair works. The work of fire and building safety is for specialists who are trained, certified, and registered within their profession or trade.
- In the event builders or plumbers are required, they must be licenced for commercial building work as Church buildings are commercial buildings. Domestic licences are not applicable.

# Monthly door inspection

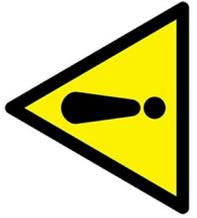
- Can be undertaken by a member of the church council or delegated responsible person.
- Record inspections in the Exit Door Logbook in the same way as it is done for any other ESM check.





# Check

- All paths of travel including passageways towards the emergency exit doorways are free from obstructions, ie pews, stacked chairs, furniture, uneven carpets or damaged floor coverings, general clutter, trip and slip hazards.
- All emergency exit doors are free from obstruction and clutter in and around the doorway, ensure that all emergency exit doors can swing fully open outwards and freely.



# Check

- Ensure external pathways away from the emergency exit doors are not obstructed by vegetation or stored items, trip hazards, uneven or damaged stairs and pavement.
- Ensure external walkways maintain direct access to the emergency assembly point. This may include reviewing walkways, courtyards, and locked gates.

# Preparing the AFSS

- Within 12 months of the Fire Safety Certificate/Fire Safety Schedule OR the last Annual Fire Safety Statement, prepare an Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS).
- 12 months' evidence of testing by Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety) is required to complete an AFSS and there must be no outstanding compliance items. The AFSS must be in the prescribed form.
- Statcom Systems is a recommended provider who can supply the service to prepare the AFSS.

- The AFSS can be completed and signed by the Building Owner or a person signing for the building owner. Property Services recommends Statcom Systems is engaged for the preparation and sign off of the AFSS.
- It is **not recommended** that any church council member takes on this responsibility and it is best that issuing of the AFSS is passed onto a Fire Services Professional such as Statcom Systems.
- Statcom Systems will digitally store the AFSS and make copies downloadable via their Web Portal.
- Statcom Systems will lodge the AFSS with Council and NSW Fire Rescue.
- If not using Statcom Systems, forward a copy of the AFSS to Presbytery and Synod Property Services

# Ensure your contractor agreements are all in place for ongoing servicing

- All ESM contractor arrangements should be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing testing is carried out in accordance with the Fire Safety Schedule and by accredited practitioners (fire safety).
- Where the congregation is satisfied with contractor service ongoing/rollover arrangements provide convenience.
- Church Councils are invited to be part of a tender process for maintenance/testing contractors. Please complete the ESM Maintenance Contractor plus “Test & Tag” Tender Enquiry form supplied in the ESM Info pack sent to all Church Council secretaries.

# Property Services and Presbytery Support

- Letter sent to all Church Councils.
- Presbytery and Property Services available for advice.
- ESM information sessions.
- Discounted rates with Statcom to assist with AFSS, monitoring, log books, access to web based portal.
- Assistance with contractors who perform the testing, maintenance and repairs – seeking response from Church Councils for collective tender/procurement, including test and tag.

# Property Services and Presbytery Support

- Property Services Development Managers and Project Managers will assist in setting up your ESM program at the conclusion of new constructions.
- Available to assist obtaining legal advice as to whether ESM costs can be passed to a tenant for retail leases. Landlord remains responsible for ESMs.
- Property Services can assist with discussions with Uniting regarding ESMs.
- We will continue to review ESM log books as evidence of ESM maintenance during site visits.

## In future:

- The AFSS will become a standard required attachment for property applications to Lease Commercial Buildings and for Church Renovations/Developments.
- ESM costs should become standard items in congregation's annual budgets and forecasts.
- **Closing comment:**
- Remember, **only** a Registered Building Surveyor may identify the ESMs for your building and prepare the ESM Maintenance Determination and Fire Safety Schedule if there is not an existing Fire Safety Schedule that sets out the ESMs.

# Contractor suggestions

- **Emergency lighting and exit signage** – registered electrician.
- **Fire extinguisher, Fire blanket and Hose reel** – Fire Services contractor such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chubb, Wormald, FES.
- **Fire hydrant** – Fire-certified plumbing contractor.
- **Evacuation diagram** - Fire Services contractor. Statcom Systems provides this service, some drafting and architectural firms can provide these diagrams.

# Contractor suggestions

- **Fire doors (if applicable) or Emergency exit doors** - Fire Services contractor or Registered Commercial Builder such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chubb, Wormald, FES.
- **Smoke or heat detection** - Fire Services contractor such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chubb, Wormald, FES.
- **Fire indicator panel** - Fire Services contractor such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chubb, Wormald, FES.



# **ESMs are for the Preservation of People and Life**

**Thank you for the work you are doing to keep  
our church buildings safe**