

# Advisory note

A service to A.G. Coombs clients

April 2005

## Draft Replacement for the Australian Standard for Maintenance of Fire Protection Equipment

Public comments closed in November 2004 for the Draft Standard DR 04463 - Maintenance of Fire Protection Equipment. This new Standard is set to replace the existing Australian Standards suite AS 1851. Apart from consolidating the suite of Standards into a single document there are two significant changes.

The first is a more rigorous testing regime at frequencies that are different to the current Standard, and the second is the introduction of an annual survey of selected systems.

As can be seen in the table below the frequency of the tests for both sprinklers and pumps has changed. Generally, the scope for the monthly tests has increased substantially. The monthly scope includes both the current weekly scope and a majority of the current Standard's quarterly scope.

	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	6 Monthly	Yearly	3 Yearly	5 Yearly
<b>Sprinklers</b>							
AS 1851.3	X		X		X	X	
DR 04463 §2	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>Pumps</b>							
AS 1851.14	X		X		X	X	
DR 04463 §3	X	X		X	X		X

The Draft Standard allows the omission of weekly testing of sprinkler systems where:

- Main stop valves and subsidiary valves are monitored in accordance with Australian Standard AS 2118.1; and
- Water supply valves are secured in the open position; and
- Control assemblies are located in a locked room or enclosure; and
- Where required, systems incorporate an automatic jacking pump or retard chamber

Weekly testing of pump systems may be omitted where:

- Pumpsets comply with Australian Standard AS 2941-2002; or incorporate the following:
- Dual starting batteries; and
- Low battery voltage monitoring incorporating aural and visual alarms at the pump controller and CIE, where installed; and

- Low fuel monitoring incorporating aural and visual alarms at the pump controller and CIE, where installed

The omission of the weekly test could lead to water savings in excess of 50% compared to typical current annual testing consumption.

The second significant change is the introduction of a periodic visual survey of selected systems to assist in maintaining the design intent.

The replacement Standard will be effective as soon as it is finalised by Standards Australia and is currently scheduled for publication in June 2005.

Currently AS 1851 is not called up in the Building Code of Australia. In Victoria, for existing buildings, constructed post July 1994, the required maintenance Standard should be referenced on the Occupancy Permit. If a building owner wishes to change to the new Standard they must either apply to the Relevant Building Surveyor to make the amendments or apply to Council. For Victorian buildings constructed pre July 1994 the owner is required to ensure that the system is "maintained in a state which enables the (system) to fulfill its purpose". There is no legislative process currently in place that requires the approval of an authority to change the referenced Standard.

Draft standard DR 04463 can be purchased from <http://www.standards.com.au>.

For more information contact:

**Bart Taylor at Walker Fire Protection**

on 03 9645 4066 or  
[btaylor@walkerfire.com.au](mailto:btaylor@walkerfire.com.au)

**Bryon Price at A.G.Coombs**

on 03 9248 2700 or  
[bprice@coombs-contracting.com.au](mailto:bprice@coombs-contracting.com.au)



**A.G.Coombs**  
Together we achieve the extraordinary

A.G. Coombs Pty Ltd 26 Cochranes Road Moorabbin Victoria 3189 Australia

Phone 03 9248 2700 Fax 03 9248 2751 [www.coombs.com.au](http://www.coombs.com.au) ACN 005 653 332

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication A.G. Coombs assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions or for any consequences of reliance on this publication.