

# Advisory

A service to A.G. Coombs clients

# note

October 2005

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

The amended version of AS1851 - Maintenance of Fire Protection Equipment was published in September 2005. This new Standard replaces the previous AS1851 suite of Australian Standards. Apart from consolidating the Standards suite into a single document there are broadly two significant changes.

The first is a more rigorous testing regime at longer intervals than the previous Standard, and the second is the introduction of an annual survey of selected systems.

### Testing Regime

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.

AS1851	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	6 Monthly	Yearly	3 Yearly	5 Yearly
<b>Sprinklers</b>							
Previous	X		X		X	X	
New	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>Pumps</b>							
Previous	X		X		X	X	
New	X	X		X	X		X

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

- Main stop valves and subsidiary valves are monitored in accordance with Australian Standard AS2118.1; 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 AS2941-2002; 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 pump controller and CIE, if installed.

It should be noted that the omission of the weekly test could lead to water savings in excess of 50% compared to typical current annual testing consumption in some buildings.

### Annual Survey

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

The new version of AS1851 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 amendment 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". For pre 1994 buildings there is no legislative process currently in place that requires the approval of an authority to change the referenced Standard.

The new standard also presupposes a number of design records and hardware that may not exist for older buildings and some that are not even required in the current installation standards. As such, a detailed review of the installation and records should be undertaken prior to adopting the new standard.

The new AS1851 Standard can be purchased from <http://www.standards.com.au>.

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