



Fire safety is one of the highest pressures and significant components of healthcare facility management. The people inside these facilities — unlike a shopping mall, school, or sporting arena — are often sick, disabled, or elderly.

There are special concerns due to the occupants' ability to respond to fire alarm signals on their own accord. It is recommended that all healthcare facilities are designed, constructed, maintained and operated to minimise the possibility of a fire emergency requiring the evacuation of occupants.

Because the safety of healthcare occupants cannot be ensured adequately by dependence on evacuation of the building, their protection from fire must be provided by appropriate arrangement of facilities, adequate staffing, and development of operating and maintenance procedures.

**With frail, often immobile patients fire protection in healthcare facilities requires careful planning and technical knowledge. It is important that healthcare providers seek professional assistance to ensure a tailored solution is implemented for their facilities.**

**This includes emergency procedures for mobility restricted patients and localised systems for valuable medical resources.**

The Western Australian Department of Health has issued building guidelines that includes fire services. The Proprietor of a health care facility shall define the fire safety strategy and extent of fire services to be provided and the performance required which shall be not less than as required by the National Construction Code, other statutory regulations, Fire and Emergency Services, the Guidelines and the Proprietor's Facility Risk Management Plan.

Fire safety provisions shall be provided to comply with requirements of the National Construction Code and the

Department of Health's Guidelines and may include but not be limited to:

- Provision of materials and methods of construction complying with codes and regulations.
- Compartmentation of the building(s) into fire and smoke control Compartments.
- Provision of fire egress arrangements (suitable for the nature of the facility and occupant/patient).
- Provision of automatic fire detection and alarm system.
- Provision of Emergency Warning and Intercommunication (EWIS).
- Storage arrangements for firefighting water.
- Firefighting water pressure boosting arrangements.
- Provision of smoke clearing ventilation.
- Smoke mode controls for ventilation plant.
- Provision of escape route air pressurisation.
- Provision of emergency warning and information equipment.
- Provision of fire hydrant equipment.
- Provision of automatic fire extinguishing and suppression systems.
- Provision of first attack firefighting equipment, including fire hose reels, portable fire extinguishers and fire blankets.
- Provision of escape/evacuation diagrams.
- Provision of a National Construction Code Compliance Report prepared by the building Surveyor, to be kept at the facility at all times.
- Provision of fire/smoke compartmentation drawings prepared by the architect to be kept at the facility at all times.