

BCA Update – Fire Policy Review

The Auckland Council Fire Protection Policy AC2318 has recently undergone review with the update to be issued in May. Auckland Council's Fire Policy sets out Council's expectations for the consenting of fire designs and includes information relating to the quality of documentation, the Fire Engineering Brief process, new and existing buildings, Fire Service involvement and other consenting requirements.

The review has been undertaken in consultation with the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment and has involved a range of stakeholders including the New Zealand Fire Service and external consultancies.

Updates to the Policy include a range of minor and also more important changes to Council's requirements given the on-going review and auditing of consents and also to reflect the evolving nature of fire code and design environment. Important changes include those involving the Fire Engineering Brief process, requirements for when Producer Statements are presented and also further guidance and clarification for other aspects such as Documentation and Construction Monitoring.

The quality and consistency of Building Consent documentation continues to be an area of concern with many examples of consent applications being lodged with insufficient or incomplete supporting documentation and in some cases contradictory information being supplied. The update provides clarification with regards to documentation requirements and the need for supporting evidence to provide confirmation to the Council that all of the fire design and other disciplines requirements are accurately reflected within the consent documentation.

Requirements surrounding the Fire Engineering Brief process have been updated to reflect the current and future status of the FEB process to support fire designs undertaken in accordance with the Verification Method C/VM2 and for specific designs.

Peer Review expectations have been clarified specifically for 'High-Risk' design work which is now defined. Designers are reminded that the decision as to whether a peer review or regulatory review is undertaken, which option is agreeable and who performs this role remains at the sole discretion of Council.

Construction Monitoring involving the design engineer may be necessary depending on the complexity of the building work or design requirements. Given that the design team are often best placed to establish the Construction Monitoring requirements the Policy clarifies that these need to be identified as part of the consent proposal and documentation. Where not defined, Council may require a specific level of construction monitoring as part of the approvals process.

The updated version of Council's **Fire Protection Policy** is expected to be available in May and will replace the current version available from the Auckland Council website.