

Evacuation Plans

This Fast Fact clarifies the position of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) on its process and role in reviewing and utilising Emergency and Evacuation Management Plans for developments in bush fire prone areas.

The general terms of approval (GTAs) issued by the RFS, particularly with a Special Fire Protection Purpose development application, often contain reference to the preparation of an Emergency and Evacuation Management Plan for the development in question. Such a plan is to be prepared in accordance with the **acceptable solutions** for emergency and evacuation planning outline in section 4.2.7 of *Planning for Bush Fire Protection 2006* (PBP).

In addition to the general requirements of PBP, there are three key documents that guide the preparation of such evacuation plans. The application of these documents is dependent upon the nature of the proposed development and includes the following:

- *Australian Standard 3745 (2010) – ‘Planning for emergencies in facilities.*
- *Australian Standard 4083 (2010) – ‘Planning for emergencies – Health care facilities’,*
- NSW RFS – *Guidelines for the Preparation of Bush Fire Evacuation Plans* and to an extent;
- NSW RFS – *Bush Fire Survival Plan.*

These documents provide guidance as to the required content and appropriate utilization of the evacuation plans. Furthermore, the **performance criteria** for emergency and evacuation planning,

as outlined in section 4.2.7 of PBP, specifies that ‘an *Emergency and Evacuation Management Plan* is **approved** by the relevant fire authority for the area’. However, the RFS does not provide a comprehensive review and/or **approval** of emergency and evacuation planning documents.

The relevant certifying authority is responsible for the certification and approval of emergency and evacuation plans in accordance with the approved standards. This role may be further extended to incorporate certification of the performance-based criteria also, depending upon the expertise of the certifying authority. The RFS does **NOT** issue a deemed approval or certification that the evacuation plan is suitable and fit-for-purpose.

The only exception to the above may be where locally significant development (in terms of emergency management) is captured under the relevant Displan (Disaster Plan). The objective of a Displan is to ensure a coordinated response to emergencies by all agencies having responsibilities and functions in emergencies.

Under these circumstances a copy of the evacuation may be required to be supplied to either:

- Local Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC);
- RFS District Office; or
- Local Emergency Management Officer (LEMO) – generally situated within the relevant local council.

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