



A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

It's not worth the risk!

Our Inspectors are telling me and Landlords need to be made aware that Municipal Council Inspectors are currently on the move across Victoria being vigilant on locating non-compliant commercial properties (shops, offices, factories, schools, public buildings etc).

Victorian Legislation has made it mandatory that an owner of a commercial building is now legally responsible for the installation and maintenance of Essential Safety Measures. Under the Australian Building Code, ESMs are defined as the primary life and safety measures needed to protect building occupants in the event of a fire.

Non-compliance can result in infringement notices being issued, with the most common fines relating to unsafe or blocked passage ways, unmaintained fire extinguishers, exit signs not working and even faulty door handles. What most landlords don't know is that they can be fined for not having an annual ESM Safety Audit to present to council inspectors within 24 hours of the inspector requesting it. Non-compliance may also place the owners building insurance at risk with insurance companies not paying out because it is deemed that the owner did not satisfactorily maintain and protect their building.

At AESI we understand Council requirements and what landlords need to do, to satisfy fire safety needs and the often complex Government Legislation. Please don't hesitate to call me if you would like to discuss any aspect of this article or if you would like us to prepare an authentic Essential Safety Measures inspection and Audit Report for your building.

David Hassett MD AESI



Little Known Landlord Fact –

A fire hydrant system must be provided to serve a Commercial building:

- having a total floor space greater than 500m² and
- within 90 meters of the building
- where a fire brigade is available to attend the building fire
- for multi-story buildings, internal fire hydrants must serve only the story of location.

ASBESTOS ... DANGEROUS LIAISONS

In Australia asbestos building materials and products were used prolifically in the building industry from the 1940s to the cessation of its use in the 1980s. It is therefore likely, many commercial type buildings built before 1990, contain asbestos of some kind. Since then it is now commonly accepted that Asbestos fibres if breathed into the lungs can cause a range of often terminal diseases, including mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis.

Landlord Obligations with asbestos

If you are a commercial property owner who leases or rents, for example, a building or part of a building to a business, then you may have obligations under the Workplace and Safety Regulations to present a safe workplace.

If you engage a property manager, then the responsibility of managing asbestos may be delegated to the property manager. However, legal duties in relation to health and safety (including managing asbestos) cannot be delegated and you, as the property owner, are ultimately responsible for ensuring such workplaces are safe from asbestos and without risks to health.



DID YOU KNOW?

The all-powerful Metropolitan Fire Chief can at all reasonable times have free access to any land, building premises or other place for the purpose of ascertaining whether the section 32 regulations and any other law relating to the following are complied with.

- the storage of explosives
- the storage of radioactive substances
- the storage of inflammable liquids or substances
- the prevention of life and property loss in the case of fire.



LANDLORD/TENANT PROBLEMS? MAYBE CALL CONSUMER AFFAIRS.

Consumer Affairs Victoria is a business unit of the Department of Justice & Regulation, within the Victorian government. It is Victoria's consumer affairs regulator and its' purpose is to help Victorians be responsible and informed businesses and consumers.

To do this they:

- review and advise the state government on consumer legislation and industry code
- advise and educate consumers, tenants, businesses and landlords on their rights, responsibilities and changes to the law
- register and license businesses and occupations
- conciliate disputes between consumers and traders, and tenants and landlords
- enforce and ensure compliance with the laws.

The Consumer Affairs Department advise and assist on topics including renting and accommodation, estate agents, building, buying and trading. They license or register and regulate a range of occupations, including rooming house operators, landlords and real estate agents, and owners' corporation managers.

Consumer Affairs have experts in a wide range of fields that can provide advice and direction on many issues affecting landlords. For assistance, check out their website or phone 1300 55 81 81.



ARE YOU READY FOR A WORST CASE SCENARIO?

Damage Control and Business Continuity Checklist

AESI recommend this basic checklist to reduce damage caused from fire and for quickly getting the business "back in business."

- Staff training – What to do if exposed to an unexpected fire. Depending on your business size this will mean at least knowing your safe evacuation points and the need to dial Triple Zero (000).
- Planning for Business Continuity – Knowing what information is important for continuing the business, including plans to protect and/or restore all important information (hard copy & IT) such as supplier and client lists, business contracts and insurance details.
- Contingency Plans – If a fire causes severe damage to your building you should plan for an appropriate off-site location to continue conducting business and to store important information.

AESI can help you develop a simple plan to firstly safeguard against fire and water damage and secondly to continue in business if your existing business property becomes uninhabitable.

Call David on 9815 2085.

SAFE USE OF ELECTRICITY AND POWER BOARDS

- Use one power board per power point
- Never plug a power board into a power board
- Only purchase electrical products with either a regulatory compliance mark or Australian approval mark.



NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Maintaining the safety of your property is paramount to protecting your investment. AESI Services can help.

- Asbestos Property Reports
- Essential Safety Measures inspections/audits
- Evacuation Plans and Training
- Occupational Health & Safety Issues
- Repairs and Maintenance.

OUR AUTUMN SAFETY TIP

Remember time change means workplace safety checks



When putting clocks back one hour for the end of daylight savings, it's a good habit to change smoke alarm batteries and verify that fire extinguishers are fully charged and in working order.

AUSTRALIAN ESSENTIAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

For confidential advice and assistance call AESI, Suite 13, 118 Church St, Hawthorn VIC 3122
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