

THE BUILDING CODE OF AUSTRALIA

What is the BCA?

It is a uniform set of technical requirements standards for the design and construction of buildings and other structures throughout Australia.

Legal Standards

The BCA sets down the objectives, performance requirements and deemed-to-satisfy provision which apply to the construction of buildings of various sizes and uses for all classes of occupancy) in any part of Australia. It regulates all building work in Australia to help achieve acceptable standards of structural efficiency, fire safety, health and amenity which all have long-term benefits to the community.

Variations

The Code allows for variations in climate and geological or geographic conditions.

BCA is Controlled by Legislation

The BCA covers those aspects of building which are controlled by legislation such as structure, fire resistance, access and egress, fire-fighting equipment, mechanical ventilation, lift installations and certain aspects of health and amenity. It does not apply to the technical details of services such as plumbing, electrical services, lifts or moving walkways or to other aspects of design or construction normally covered by building regulations.

Acceptable Standards

The basic objective of the BCA is to ensure that acceptable standards of structural sufficiency, fire safety, health and amenity are maintained for the benefit of the community now and in the future. Its requirements are intended to extend no further than is necessary in the public interest. They are intended to be easily understood and cost effective, but not to be needlessly onerous in their application.

Objectives for the Provisions

The objectives are the basic concepts which apply generally to all buildings and structures. The provisions of each part of the BCA are acceptable by the authorities as meeting the objectives.

Broad statements of intent are included at the beginning of each section to identify and deal with basic concepts applicable to all buildings and structures.

These indicate what clauses in relevant parts mean to achieve and are not intended for use as controls in their own right. They are to assist only in the interpretation and application of the parts they refer to.

Performance Requirements

Some BCA requirements are expressed in performance terms and provide for alternatives to deemed-to-satisfy provisions.

The alternatives include Accreditation Certificates, test reports or other documentary evidence to show that an alternative or innovative material component, design or construction method satisfies a particular BCA performance requirement.



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NOTES

Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions

Conclusive proof of meeting the relevant performance requirements of the BCA is available by complying with any Australian standard, any particular material, component or construction detailed in a deemed-to-satisfy provision.

There is no obligation to use a deemed-to-satisfy provision, alternatives may be used if an applicant can provide sufficient evidence to confirm that the relevant performance requirement has or will be met.

Example

Treads and Risers

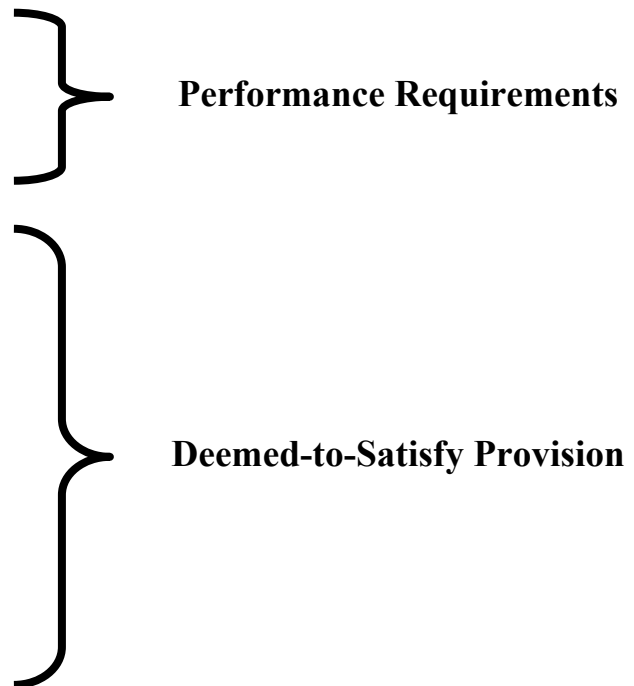
- (a) A stairway must be suitable to provide safe passage in relation to the nature, volume and frequency or likely usage.
- (b) A stairway satisfies (a) if it has:
 - (i) not more than 18 or less than 2 risers in each flight; and
 - (ii) going (G), riser (R) and quantity (2R&G) in accordance with Table D2.13; and
 - (iii) goings and risers that are constant throughout in one flight; and
 - (iv) risers which do not have any openings that would allow a 125mm sphere to pass through between the treads; and
 - (v) treads which have a nonslip finish or a suitable non-skid strip near the edge of the nosings.

Prescriptive Provisions

These are minimum statutory requirements and no performance requirement is expressed, therefore a proposed material, component, design or construction method cannot be assessed against them.

Further Advice

Any proposal to seek variation from a prescriptive requirements should be discussed with Council's Development Services.



Standard Marks product certification by Standards Australia is acceptable for compliance with particular requirements or standards.