

THE BUILDING CODE OF AUSTRALIA

Update by Tracey Gramlick, Executive Director

The Australian Building Codes Board has released the BCA 2009, effective from May 1st. Like previous BCA amendments this is the result of an extensive development process through research and consultation with stakeholders.



This update has been prepared based on notes provided by the Australian Building Codes Board to assist BCA users in identifying changes incorporated in the 2009 edition. It is specific to the window industry related updates.

If additional information is required to assist in understanding, interpreting or applying the provisions of BCA 2009, reference should be made to the Guide to the BCA, or a visit to their website www.abcb.gov.au.

Glazing

The intent of the definition for glazing has been clarified by referring to the "envelope" of the building rather than the "external fabric" of the building.

AS 1170

After the expiry of the agreed transition period, reference to "Minimum design loads on structures", Part 2 "Wind loads" 1989 has been deleted. The BCA now references AS/NZS 1170.2:2002.

Figure A1.1 Climate zone map

The climate zone map in Figure A1.1 has been updated but is still generally represented by 8 zones.

Class 2-9 Buildings (Volume One) of the BCA

Section J, Energy Efficiency

The title of the Part has been amended to "Glazing" to more closely reflect the contents of the Part.

Clause J2.4(a), Glazing method 2

This has been amended so that the glazing in each storey must be assessed separately in accordance with the other provisions for both the glazing in the external fabric facing each orientation and for the glazing in the internal fabric using the south orientation energy constants and shading multipliers. Clarification has been added that when a mezzanine is included in a storey, it is included when calculating glazing allowances for the storey.

Housing Provisions (Volume Two) of the BCA

AS 4055

After the expiry of the agreed transition period, reference to AS 4055 "Wind loads for housing" 1992 has been deleted and the 2006 publication is the sole reference.

Part 2.5, Clause P2.5.2 Barriers

For consistency with changes made at BCA 2008 and the Performance Requirement in Volume One, P2.5.2 has been amended so that openable windows are no longer exempted from the requirement to protect people from falling.

Volume Two now requires a balustrade or other barrier to be provided where it is possible for a person to fall through an openable window from a floor or the like that is more than 4 metres above the surface beneath.

Clause 3.9.2.3 *Balustrades or other barrier construction* was amended by adding (a) (ii) (c) to specify a height for the balustrade or other barrier at an openable window of 865 mm for consistency with the similar provision in Volume One. Prior to this change, the height of the balustrade or other barrier at these locations was 1.00 m.

The AWA has produced a comprehensive guidance booklet on how to interpret and apply the new requirements for members that can be found on the AWA website.

Part 2.6, Energy Efficiency

Due to Queensland adopting the main BCA provisions for energy efficiency, the reference to Queensland has been deleted from Note 2 where the variation was previously applied.

A new Note 3 has been inserted stating that in Tasmania Part 2.6 is replaced with BCA 2005 Part 2.6 until 1 January 2010. Consequently, the reference to Tasmania in Note 2 has been removed.

Part 3.6, Glazing 3.6.0(a), State and Territory variation

The Queensland variation to meeting performance requirements P2.1 and P2.2.2 has been deleted bringing national consistency to the treatment of window performance.

The impact of this is a reduction in serviceability wind loads but a significant increase in ultimate strength. You should check with your system supplier or building designer if you have doubts.

Part 3.12, Clause 3.12.2.1(b) Explanatory information

In note 1, reference to the guidelines of the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) has been changed to the Technical protocols and Procedures Manual for the Energy Rating of Fenestration Products by the Australian Fenestration rating Council (AFRC). In line with this change, in Note 2 the reference to the NFRC has been changed to AFRC.

The AWA encourages you all to become familiar with the general requirements of the BCA and now, more than ever, energy efficiency provisions. The window industry and consumers alike need to be informed and educated about requirements in different climate zones and of systems design implications.

Discussions with stakeholders are already well underway for the BCA 2010 provisions and the AWA website; www.awa.org.au will be updated as soon as they are to hand.

There are still close to 100 variations in the BCA but the Australian Building Codes Board has agreed that all variations are to be removed from the BCA by 2011. For this major milestone to be achieved any changes to the BCA that need to be included in the public comment draft of BCA 2011 have to be finalised by April 2010.