UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

PRESBYTERY OF ILLAWARRA

ABN: 74 041 246 188

*Focused on God’s Mission – Providing Leadership – Growing Discipleship*

# KEEPING YOUR CHURCH FIRE SAFE

The fire safety statement is a record of maintenance of the fire safety systems within a building that is required to be given to your local Council.

Under [**clause 177**](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2000/557/part9/div5/sec177) and [**clause 180**](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2000/557/part9/div5/sec180) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 Buildings of The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of NSW and the ACT are required to meet Fire Safety Standard.

The importance of keeping the fire safety measures up to date is essential to ensure the safety of the public, employees and other people that may be affected if a fire or emergency within a building was to occur.

Inspections and maintenance along with annual fire safety Statements must be carried out by a competent fire safety practitioner to a standard no less than to which the measure was originally designed, as identified on the building’s fire safety schedule.

Below is the list of Minimum Essential Requirements.

* Exit and Emergency lights (to guide occupants to safe Egress Paths)
* Fire Extinguishers or Blankets (To allow effective first response to a fire)
* Evacuation Drill/Warden training every 12 months
* Smoke Alarms
* Evacuation Plans (to educate the regular occupants how to evacuate the building)
* Fire Safety Statement (to declare the building is capable of performing to the fire safety standard required)

Complying with the minimum essential standards shows we are meeting our legal and moral obligations and assists in providing a safe workplace and property.

If Councils have not asked you for an Annual Fire Safety Statement, it is still important to meet the minimum standards required for the building.

The 2018 Annual Fire Safety statements must be completed by the churches “responsible body” (Regulation 4.4.1 Responsibility for Property) and forwarded to the Synod Property Trust to sign section 9 the Owners Authorisation.

Please note, when your congregation completes an Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS), in accordance with the schedule supplied by your local council, copies should be sent to the Presbytery Administrator, and also to: Synod Property Enquiries Property@nswact.uca.org.au

Synod will then send the signed document back to you for you to lodge with your local council and also Fire and Rescue Fire and Rescue NSW Commissioner afss@fire.nsw.gov.au

If you are unsure this affects you please contact Synod Office Property Services.

**Email:****property@nswact.uca.org.au**

**Phone: 82674300**

# FIRE SAFETY STATEMENTS

As part of the construction of a building, a variety of Essential Fire Safety Measures are installed in order to comply with the Building Code of Australia. These may include a range of items such as fire extinguishers, fire hose reels, exit and emergency lighting, fire detection systems and fire sprinkler systems. The measures will be listed in the Fire Safety Schedule of the DA or Construction Certificate.

At the completion of building works, the building owner (or their agent) is required to submit a final Fire Safety Certificate to their local Council before an Occupation Certificate can be issued. This final fire safety certificate is a declaration that each of the specified essential fire safety measures listed in the Fire Safety Schedule have been installed and are capable of operating to their required performance standard.

In preparing this certificate, the building owner/owner’s agent obtains certification from the designers and installers of each safety measure that these standards have been met, for example, AS1670 for fire detection, AS2441 for hose reels, AS2118 for fire sprinklers.

Every twelve months after the building is completed the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2017*requires an Annual Fire Safety Statement be prepared and forwarded to Council, with a copy to the fire brigade and a further copy displayed in the building entry.

Under this new legislation, the Annual Fire Safety Statement must confirm that an [Accredited Practitioner (Fire Safety)](https://cfspnsw.com.au/what-is-an-accredited-practitioner-fire-safety/) (or multiple practitioners if required) has inspected the building, assessed the fire safety measures, and found that each of the measures is capable of performing to the relevant standard.

The Annual Fire Safety Statement can only be signed by the building owner or owner’s agent and not by anyone else.

Although Councils may or may not send reminder notices regarding statement submission, the onus is on the building owner to ensure this annual statement is submitted by the due date every year.

# **What is a fire safety measure? (cl. 165)**

Fire safety measures include items of equipment, forms of construction or fire safety strategies that are provided in a building to ensure the safety of persons using the building in the event of fire.
It can include items such as:

* portable fire extinguishers,
* fire hydrants,
* fire sprinklers,
* fire detection and alarm systems and
* lightweight construction.

Fire safety measures include both essential fire safety measures and critical fire safety measures as defined in clause 165 of the Regulation.

Essential fire safety measures are often identified in the building’s fire safety schedule, where a schedule was required to be issued, or they could be included in the essential services list attached to an approval or order issued under the *Local Government Act 1919* or the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Essential fire safety measures are the fire safety measures that form part of an annual fire safety statement.

Critical fire safety measures are the fire safety measures that are of a nature or installed in a manner which requires periodic assessment and inspection at intervals of less than 12 months. These measures are specifically identified on the fire safety schedule and form part of a supplementary fire safety statement. A critical fire safety measure is also an essential fire safety measure.

# **What is a fire safety schedule? (cl. 168)**

A fire safety schedule specifies each of the fire safety measures that apply to the building premises. The fire safety measures specified in the fire safety schedule will vary for each building and can be both essential fire safety measures and critical fire safety measures. The schedule also specifies the minimum standard of performance for each of the measures. This standard reflects the standard to which each measure is designed, installed and capable of operating.