

Building Code of Australia updates for 2009

THE 2009 BUILDING CODE OF AUSTRALIA (BCA) VOLUMES 1 AND 2 WILL COME INTO EFFECT FROM 1 MAY 2009. THE KEY UPDATES THAT AFFECT BUILDERS AND TRADE CONTRACTORS ARE OUTLINED IN THIS INFORMATION CIRCULAR.

Each year the BCA is updated to ensure it keeps pace with new technology, incorporates results of research, is cost effective, reflects current industry practices and best practice regulatory principals.

A broad range of changes usually occur to address slight discrepancies and references within the BCA itself from the previous year.

Once again in 2009, there are some changes that impact building works which builders and trade contractors should be aware of.

BCA Volume 1 – Class 2 to 9 Class Buildings

Section D (Reference to Wire Balustrade)

DV1 New Verification Method inserted setting procedures for the testing of wire balustrades as an alternative to complying with the relevant Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions contained in D2.16.

Clarification added that the requirement to provide a balustrade or other barrier does not

apply to a retaining wall unless it is associated with a delineated path of access to a building from a road, or between buildings.

D2.16(i)(iii)(C) Maximum spacing between rails for a continuous vertical wire balustrade increased from 800mm to 900mm to allow a wider range of balustrade designs.

Table D2.16a Table amended by revising some tension values, providing a greater range of wires and wire spacings, deleting galvanised wire, deleting deflection values (now in new Table D2.16c), and providing additional notes.

Table D2.16b Table amended by revising the wire spacings, providing new tension values to each wire listed and providing additional notes.

Section F (Reference to Water Closet Pan Clearances)

F2.5(b) and new Reference to new Figure F2.5 inserted to provide clarification on the Figure F2.5 measurement of the 1.2m clear space.

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Section F (References Minimum Ceiling Heights for Attic Rooms)

F3.1(a) For Class 2 or Class 3 buildings and Class 4 parts, amended to specify the minimum ceiling height for attic rooms, rooms with a sloping ceiling or where there is a projection below the ceiling line.

BCA Volume 2 – Class 1 and Class 10 Buildings

Part 1.3 (References Fire-Resisting Construction)

Figure 1.3.1 Figure amended to clarify which walls are separating walls and which walls are external walls.

Part 2.5 (References Barriers)

P2.5.2 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.

V2.5.1 New Verification Method inserted setting out procedures for the testing of wire balustrades as an alternative to complying with the relevant Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions contained in 3.9.2.3.

Part 3.2 (References Concrete)

3.2.3.1(a)(iii) Allowable concrete slump amended from 80mm to 100mm in line with industry practice and to reduce the likelihood of water being added on-site to improve concrete workability.

Part 3.3 (References Vertical Articulation Joints)

3.3.1.8(g) New subclause added to prohibit the use of articulation joints over garage doors, unless the brickwork is reinforced or lateral support is provided.

Part 3.3.3 (References Masonry Accessories)

Table 3.3.3.1 The term “breaking surf” has been italicised because it is now a defined term.

Table 3.3.3.2 New table inserted for corrosion protection of built-in structural steel members such as lintels, shelf angles, connectors, accessories (other than wall ties) and the like.

Part 3.3.4 (References Weatherproofing of Masonry)

3.3.4.2 Amended by allowing mullions located in cavities to be exempted from minimum cavity widths stated in (a) and (b) provided that a vertical DPC is installed between the outer masonry leaf and each mullion.

Part 3.7.1 (References Fire Separation)

3.7.1.7(b) Rainwater tanks have been moved from (b)(i), where they were required by (c) to be non-combustible if within 450mm of the boundary, to (b)(v) where they may be combustible at any distance.

Part 3.8.3 (References Facilities)

3.8.3.3 and Figure 3.8.3.3 amended to refer to Figure 3.8.3.3 which provides clarification on 3.8.3.3 measurement of the 1.2m clear space between the closet pan and the doorway.

Part 3.9.2 (References Balustrades)

3.9.2.2 All situations where (a) does not apply have been consolidated into a new (b). Consequently, all the remaining provisions have been re-numbered. Clarification added that the requirement to provide a balustrade or other barrier does not apply to a retaining wall unless it is associated with a delineated path of access to a building from the road or between buildings.

3.9.2.3(f)(i)(B) As part of the revision of the wire balustrade tables, the reference to Table 3.9.2.1 has been changed to Table 3.9.2.3

3.9.2.3(f)(iii)(C) The maximum spacing between rails for a continuous vertical wire balustrade has been increased from 800mm to 900mm to allow a wider range of balustrade designs.

Part 3.12.1 (References Building Fabric)

3.12.1.2(e) New provision inserted to compensate for a reduction in ceiling insulation when exhaust fans and downlights are 1% or more of the ceiling area with reference to new Table 3.12.1.2a.

More information

For a full list of changes to the BCA 2009, go to the Australia Building Codes Board website at www.abcb.gov.au.