

Fact Sheet

Planning requirements for fire safety in multi-dwelling developments (two or more dwellings on a lot)



This Fact Sheet outlines CFA's expectations for emergency vehicle access and fire hydrant requirements in multi-dwelling developments (two or more dwellings on a lot).

What is a multi-dwelling development?

A multi-dwelling development is the construction of two or more dwellings on a lot where no subdivision is proposed.

Planning permit applications for multi-dwelling developments are required to meet clause 55 of the Victoria Planning Provisions (**VPP**).

Why is fire safety in multi-dwelling developments important?

CFA's vision is that Victorian communities are prepared for and safe from fire.

This is consistent with the objectives for planning in Victoria (section 4(1)(c) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Act)*) which includes:

“to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria.”

To achieve both CFA's mission, planning objectives and general community expectations around safety, it is important that multi-dwelling developments provide for an efficient response to fire and other emergencies.

The design response for planning permit applications involving multi-dwelling development, should provide appropriate access to infrastructure (fire hydrants) and the ability for firefighters to efficiently access that infrastructure (emergency vehicle access).

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Emergency vehicle access within multi-dwelling developments

Standard B14 at clause 55.03-9 of the VPP requires that multi-dwelling developments provide access for service, emergency and delivery vehicles (access).

This guideline will assist permit applicants, designers and Responsible Authorities to determine whether Standard B14 will be achieved.

If access is **less than 60 m**, then no further consideration of emergency vehicle access is required under Standard B14.

If access is **greater than 60 m**, to achieve Standard B14 for emergency vehicle access, the design response should show:

- trafficable widths that are at least 3.5 m; and
- at least 4.0 m vertical clearance and at least 0.5 m clearance either side of the trafficable width (**see Figure 1**). This does not include small encroachments within this area such as letterboxes, bollards and the like; and
- there is a turnaround area suitable for an Austroads 8.8m Service Vehicle (**see Figures 2 & 3**) or the vehicle access continues through to another public road. i.e. continuous vehicle motion is possible.

Figure 1 – minimum emergency vehicle access specifications.

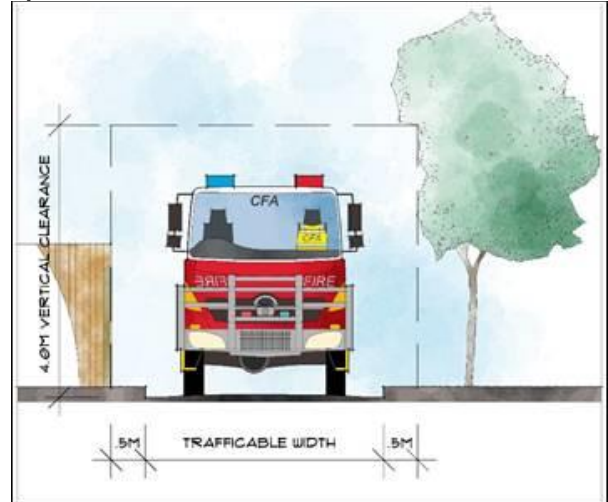


Figure 2 – Example vehicle turnaround area.

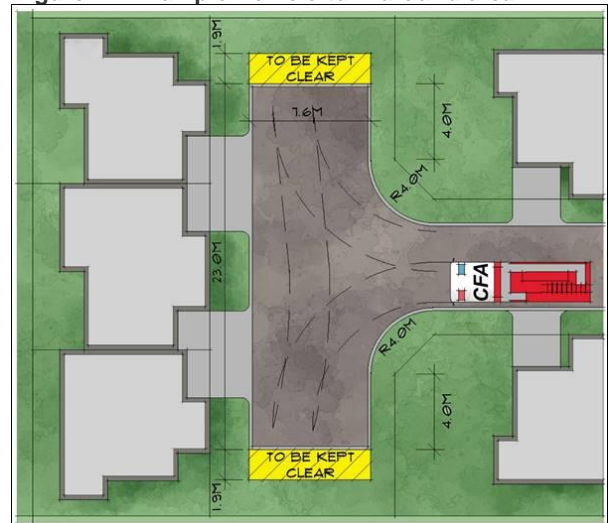
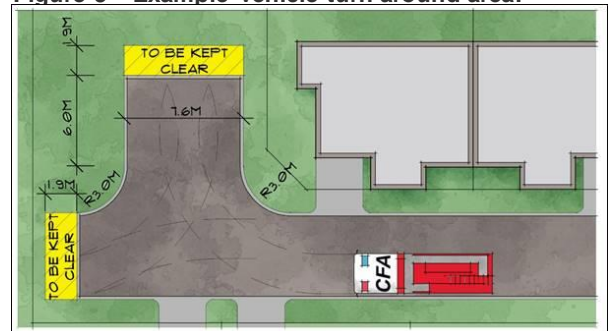


Figure 3 – Example vehicle turnaround area.



If the Responsible Authority does not view that the design response meets the dot points on the previous page, then in the first instance further information should be requested.

To explain how suitable access for service, emergency and delivery vehicles will be provided (pointing the applicant to Standard B14 and this document).

If there are still concerns, then the application should be referred to CFA for comment under Section 52 of the Act.

Fire hydrants for multi-dwelling developments

There is no Objective or Standard in clause 55 that explicitly mentions “fire hydrants”. However, Standard B4 requires the provision of reticulated services. CFA suggests compliant fire hydrant coverage should be provided to meet this standard.

The provision of fire hydrants in appropriate locations is important as water can only be pumped through fire hoses for certain distances before firefighting operations are impacted. The ability to position the fire truck appropriately in relation to a hydrant and the fire is also critical for safety.

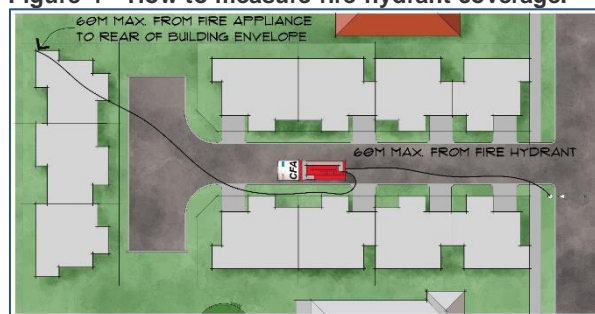
Multi-dwelling developments are also often later subdivided and not providing fire hydrants in appropriate locations at the time of construction:

- is inconsistent with the clear intent of the VPP’s to ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place at the time of subdivision.
- can create issues in satisfying the requirements of clause 56.09-3 (fire hydrant requirements for subdivisions of land).

Planning permit applications for multi-dwelling developments should identify the location of any existing fire hydrants that are nearby in the design response.

If the design response does not demonstrate that they are located within 120 m of the rear of all dwellings (measured as a hose would be laid, around objects such as fences and other buildings and not over them) (**see Figure 4**) or where it may not be clear, then a planning permit condition should be considered.

Figure 4 – How to measure fire hydrant coverage.



An example planning permit condition to achieve appropriate fire hydrant coverage could be:

Prior to occupation, an operable fire hydrant(s) must be provided within 120m from the rear of all dwellings, unless agreed in writing by the responsible authority. The fire hydrant must be identified as per the CFA guideline titled 'Identification of street hydrants for firefighting purposes'

For more information on fire safety in multi-dwelling developments, please contact CFA's Bushfire Planning Team on 03 9262 8444.