

Ministerial Building Standard MBS 003

Fire safety in caravan parks and residential parks

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1. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This standard is published as a Ministerial Building Standard that forms part of the Building Rules under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the *Act*) and must be read in conjunction with the requirements of that Act and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017 (*Regulations*). It contains fire safety provisions that apply in new *caravan parks* and *residential parks* and those parts of existing *caravan parks* and *residential parks* being upgraded or modified to address fire safety risks that arise due to the predominant use of combustible materials in the construction of *caravans*.
- 1.2 The provisions in this standard apply to *caravans* used as *recreational accommodation* and to *caravans* used as *permanent accommodation* but they do not apply to buildings and structures such as manufactured homes or cabins that are transported to site or built on-site and which are subject to the provisions of the *Building Code* and normal development assessment processes.
- 1.3 Under the *Act*, development approval is required for-
- (a) the layouts of new *caravan parks* and *residential parks*;
 - (b) alterations to site layouts and/or extensions to existing *caravan parks* and *residential parks*;
 - (c) any building work to buildings and structures covered by the provisions of the *Building Code*; and
 - (d) alterations to fire services and equipment (eg fire hydrants and fire hose reels).
- 1.4 When assessing a proposal to develop a new *caravan park*, *residential park* or to upgrade an existing park, consideration should be given to seeking the views of the fire authority where an alternative fire hydrant system to that in the deemed-to-satisfy provisions is proposed.
- 1.5 It is the responsibility of the park *owner* to ensure that-
- (a) separation distances and clearances are established and maintained to conform with the requirements of this standard;
 - (b) the performance of fire safety services and equipment is maintained; and
 - (c) the council is notified when alterations are proposed to be made to site layouts, separation distances and/or fire services and equipment.

2. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT

- 2.1 To minimise the risk of injury and loss of life that could arise from fire in *caravan parks* and *residential parks*, each occupancy must be protected from fire spread from another occupancy by-
- (a) providing separation distances-
 - (i) between a *caravan* and any adjacent *caravans* (including attached *annexes*), and
 - (ii) between a *caravan* and any adjacent *tent*, building or structure; and
 - (b) providing access, water and equipment for fire-fighting purposes, suitable for-
 - (i) occupants to use to undertake initial attack on a fire appropriate to the fire hazard, and
 - (ii) where appropriate, the fire brigade to use during fire-fighting operations; and
 - (c) reducing potential fire hazards; and

- (d) providing occupants with *automatic* warning on detection of smoke so that they may evacuate in the event of a fire to a place of safety.

3. DEEMED TO SATISFY PROVISIONS

3.1 Performance requirement 2.1 can be satisfied by complying with the deemed-to-satisfy provisions in 3.2 to 3.6 below. A reference to an Australian Standard in this section is to the edition that is current for the purposes of the *Building Code* at the time of application.

3.2 Separation distances for individual sites

3.2.1 Sites in a *caravan park* and a *residential park* must not be linked by combustible construction and for individual sites a minimum separation distance of not less than 3 metres must be provided and maintained between adjacent *caravans* (including any attached *annexe*) as shown in figure 3.2.

3.2.2 The 3 metre separation distance in 3.2.1 must also be provided and maintained between a *caravan* (including any attachment to it, such as an *annexe*, verandah or similar) and–

- (a) any *tent* on an adjoining site; and
- (b) any adjacent building or structure on an another site.

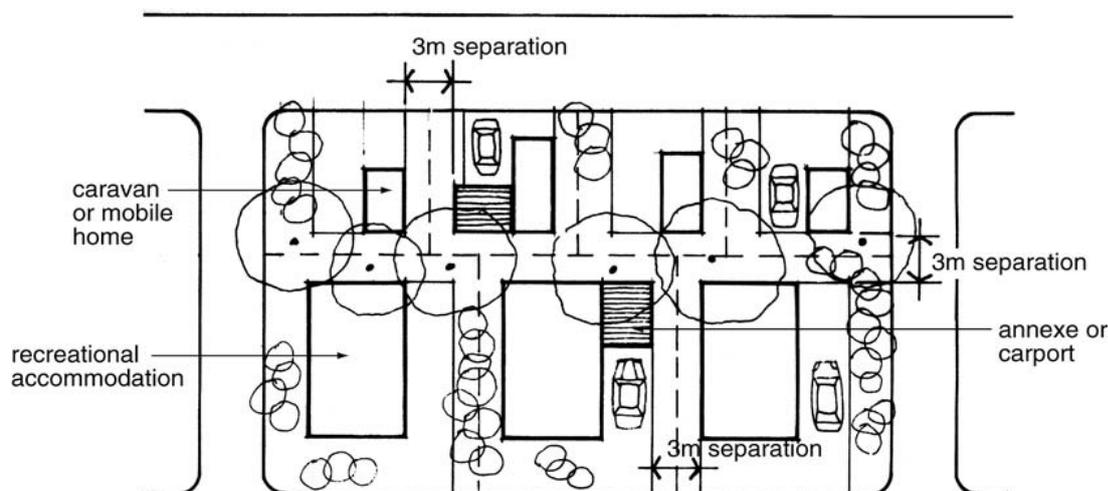


Figure 3.2

Showing separation distances required between individual sites.

3.3 Clearance distances for united sites

3.3.1 For *united sites*, a clearance distance not less than 4 metres wide must be provided around each *united site*, and *caravans* and *tents* on sites adjoining the roadway must be set back 1 metre from the roadway to allow a total clear unobstructed space not less than 6 metres wide for emergency vehicle access as shown in Figure 3.3(a).

3.3.2 a *united site* may exceed 1000m² if a fire hydrant system complying with 3.6.4 is provided that will serve each individual site on the *united site* and any sites adjacent to the *united site*.

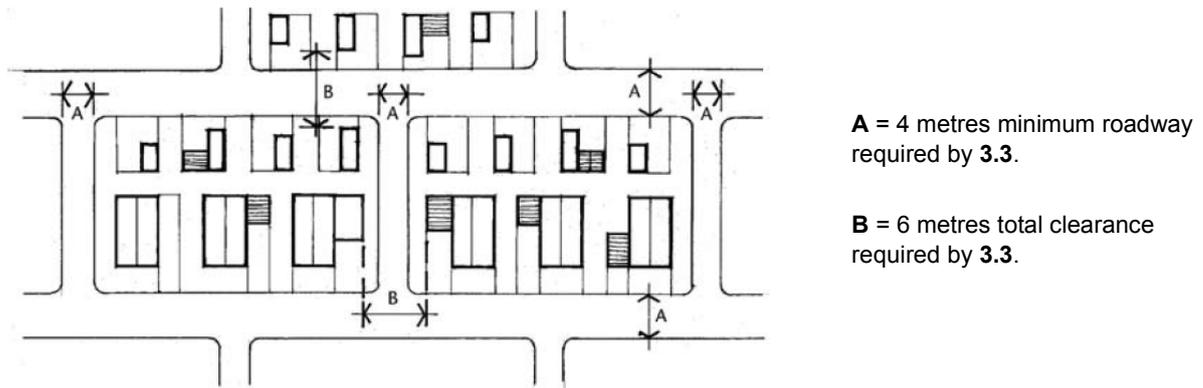


Figure 3.3 (a)
Showing clearance distances required between *united sites*.

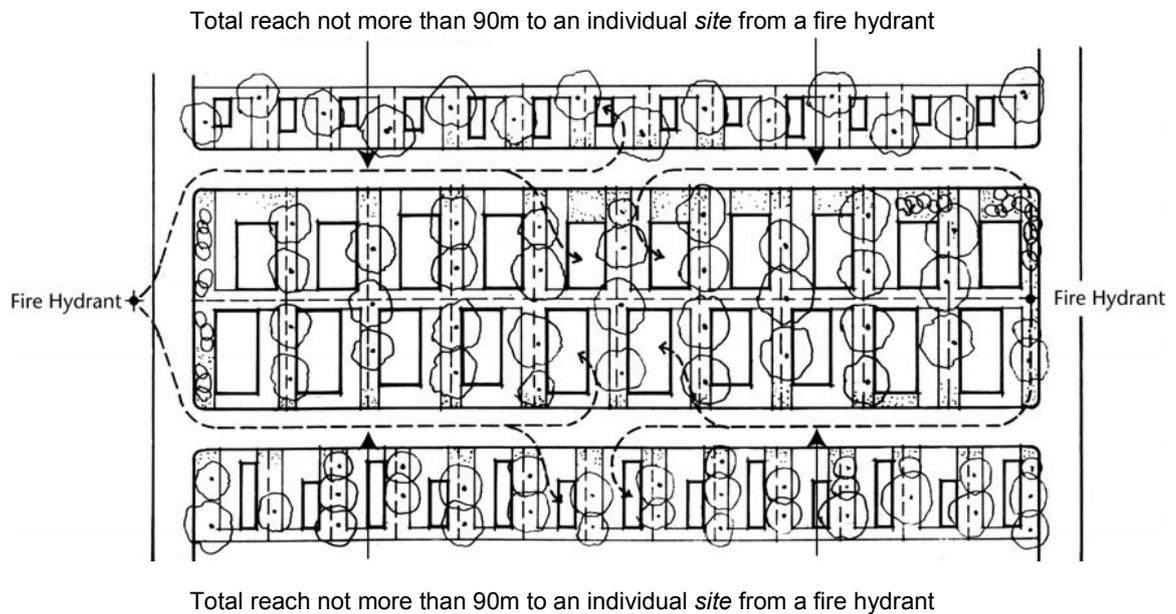


Figure 3.3(b)
Showing coverage of a fire hydrant located not more than 90 metres from individual *sites* on a *united site*.

3.4 Smoke Alarms

3.4.1 Smoke alarms complying with the requirements of the *Building Code* for dwellings must be installed in all *permanent residential accommodation*.

3.4.2 In *caravans*, smoke alarms required by 3.4.1 may be either-

- (a) connected to the consumer mains power; or
- (b) powered by a 10-year life non-replaceable, non-removable permanently connected battery.

Note. It is desirable that all types of sleeping accommodation have smoke alarms installed, however in caravans false alarms may be prevalent due to cooking in confined spaces and the installation of photo-electric (optical) smoke alarms with a 'hush' facility is recommended. This type of alarm can be isolated for a short period during cooking and will automatically reset.

3.5 Fire Extinguishers

3.5.1 Fire extinguishers are required to be installed in *caravans* in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 51 of the Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2005 as per the extract below.

Regulation 51 – Caravans

- (1) A person must not use a caravan in the country unless an efficient fire extinguisher that complies with subregulation (2) is carried in the caravan.
- (2) A fire extinguisher required under subregulation (1) must—
 - (a) comply with Australian Standard 1841.5-1997: *Portable Fire Extinguishers—Specific Requirements for Powder Type Extinguishers*; and
 - (b) have a minimum classification and rating of 10B, as defined by Australian Standard 1850-1997: *Portable Fire Extinguishers—Classification, Rating and Performance Testing*; and
 - (c) be maintained in accordance with Australian Standard 1851.1-1995: *Maintenance of Fire Protection Equipment—Portable Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets*.

3.6 Fire services and equipment

3.6.1 Water and fire-fighting equipment must be available in a *caravan park* or *residential park* for use by the occupants in the event of a fire.

3.6.2 The requirements of **3.6.1** can be met by one or more of the following-

- (a) fire hose reels complying with **3.6.3**, located to provide coverage to all individual *sites*; or
- (b) readily accessible, permanently connected garden hoses not less than 15 metres long equipped with spray nozzles, capable of providing a flow of not less than 20 litres per minute, located to provide coverage to all individual *sites*.

3.6.3 Fire hose reels provided to satisfy **3.6.2(a)** must-

- (a) comply with Australian Standard AS 1221 - *Fire hose reels*; and
- (b) be located in readily accessible and visible positions that do not present a hazard to a potential user;
- (b) achieve the required coverage from a 4 metre hose stream issuing from a nozzle at the end of a hose not exceeding 36 metre in length laid on the ground; and
- (c) be installed in accordance with Australian Standard AS 2441 - *Installation of fire hose reels*.

3.6.4 Fire hydrant systems provided to satisfy **3.3.2** must-

- (a) comply with the requirements of Australian Standard AS 2419.1 - *Fire hydrant installations - System design, installation and commissioning*, except that a reference to '4 hours' water supply in clause 4.2 of that standard is replaced with '2 hours';
- (b) where an on-site water storage facility is provided to supply the hydrant system, the capacity of the facility must be not less than 72 000 litres;
- (c) achieve the required coverage from a 10 metre hose stream issuing from a nozzle at the end of a 60 metre length of hose (laid on the ground around any obstructions), when connected to a pumping appliance located not more than 20 metres from the hydrant to

which it is connected (ie a hydrant is located not more than 90 metres from each *site* as shown in **Figure 3.3(b)**); and

- (d) an access roadway not less than 4 metres wide is provided suitable for fire-fighting appliances to use from the park entrance to a hardstand area located within 20 metres of a fire hydrant serving the *united site*.

4 MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Maintaining fire services and equipment

- 4.1.1** Fire-fighting equipment must be easily accessible and ready for use at all times.
- 4.1.2** Fire hose reels and fire hydrants installed in a *caravan park* or *residential park* are essential safety provisions that must be maintained and tested so that they continue to perform to a standard no less than the standard required at installation.
- 4.1.3** Maintenance and testing of fire hose reels and fire hydrants carried out in accordance with the provisions of *Ministerial Building Standard MBS 002* will satisfy the requirements of **4.1.2**.
- 4.1.4** In accordance with the requirements of regulation 94 of the *Regulations*, the *owner* must provide adequate proof annually to the relevant council, in a form determined by the Chief Executive, certifying that maintenance and testing of all essential safety provisions in the *caravan park* or *residential park* has been carried out.

5. FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION

5.1 Permanent residential accommodation

- 5.1.1** Where a *caravan* is used as *permanent residential accommodation*-
 - (a) the underside of the *caravan* must be enclosed with suitable materials to prevent the entry and accumulation of wind-blown debris beneath the *caravan*; and
 - (b) the storage of combustible or hazardous material is not permitted in spaces beneath the *caravan*.

5.2 Services

- 5.2.1** Gas installations must comply with the requirements of the *Gas Act 1997* and the *Gas Regulations 2012*, administered by the Office of the Technical Regulator, which requires compliance with *AS/NZS 5601.2 Gas installations in caravan parks and boats for non-propulsive purposes*.
- 5.2.2** Electrical installations must comply with the requirements of the *Electricity Act 1996* and the *Electricity (General) Regulations 2012*, administered by the Office of the Technical Regulator, which include requirements for the installation of earth leakage breakers to reduce risks to life safety.

APPENDIX A – INTERPRETATION

Act means the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

Annexe means an attachment to a *caravan* used as an extension of the habitable area of that *caravan* and has walls and a roof constructed of flexible or rigid material which can be assembled or dismantled within 24 hours by no more than 2 persons.

Automatic has the same meaning as defined in the *Building Code*.

Building Code means Volume One and Volume Two of the National Construction Code published by the Australian Building Codes Board as amended from time to time.

Caravan means a *vehicle* capable of being towed or driven that is fitted out for habitation. For the purposes of this standard a *caravan* includes-

- a campervan;
- a mobile home;
- a trailer modified for camping (camper trailer); or
- any *annexe* attached to the *caravan*

Caravan park means land for the siting of *caravans* and *tents* or other *recreational accommodation* and associated facilities. It does not include any 'group dwellings' as defined in the *Regulations* under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

Chief Executive has the same meaning as defined in section 3 of the *Act*.

Owner means the owner of the *Caravan Park* or *Residential Park*.

Permanent residential accommodation means a *caravan*, building or manufactured home which is located on a *site* for 60 consecutive days or longer or a *caravan* that is hard wired to mains power and/or has a direct connection into the park's water supply and wastewater facilities.

Readily removed means that the *caravan* has wheels attached and is in a condition that it is able to be moved from a *site* under its own power or by being towed, within 24 hours of any attached services being disconnected from it.

Recreational accommodation - a *caravan* (including an *annexe*), *tent* or the like where persons sleep that is temporarily located in a *caravan park* or *residential park* (ie for less than 60 consecutive days) and which can be *readily removed*.

Regulations means the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017.

Residential park means land for the siting of manufactured homes and *caravans* for long term occupation, including *permanent residential accommodation* as defined above.

Site means for the purposes of this standard, means the area of land identified in the layout of a *caravan park* or *residential park* for the siting of *caravans* or tents.

Tent means any easily moved shelter of canvas or similar lightweight materials, supported by one or more rigid or semi-rigid structural members fastened to the ground (eg poles, ropes and pegs).

United site means, for the purposes of this document, a group of two or more adjoining *sites* which together total 1000m² or more in area.