



ACT
Government



ACCESS TO FIRE DETECTION CONTROL & INDICATING EQUIPMENT (FDCIE)

FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINE
FSG-04

JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DIRECTORATE
EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCY
ACT FIRE & RESCUE

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acronym / Term	Definition
ACTF&R	ACT Fire & Rescue
ASE	Alarm Signalling Equipment
Competent Person	Fire service industry trained and accredited professional working for an accredited fire service company.
Emergency control organization (ECO)	A person or persons appointed by the emergency planning committee of the building to direct and control the implementation of the facilities emergency response procedures.
Emergency Planning Committee (EPC)	Person or persons responsible for the documentation and maintenance of the building's emergency plan.
Emergency response procedures	Procedures developed for identified emergencies in accordance with AS 3745-2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities.
EWIS	Emergency Warning Intercommunication System
FDAS	Fire Detection Alarm System.
FDCIE	Fire Detection Control and Indicating Equipment. This includes the fire brigade panel or fire indicator panel, any sub or mimic panels, and associated equipment such as fan controls. The Sprinkler control assembly forms part of the FDCIE.
FFCP	Fire Fan Control Panel
FIP	Fire Indicator Panel, also referred to as Fire Brigade Panel. The FIP forms part of the FDCIE.
Fire Appliance	Any device or piece of equipment or building feature forming part of the buildings fire safety system. Fire appliances include hydrants, alarm systems, fire doors, emergency warning systems, extinguishers, passive fire protection, automatic sprinkler systems etc.
Fire Brigade Panel	Fire Indicator Panel, also referred to as Fire Brigade Panel. The FIP forms part of the FDCIE.
SIP	Sub Indicator Panel – A part of the Fire Detection Control and Indicating Equipment.

PURPOSE

This guideline has been developed by ACTF&R to provide clarification regarding the legality of access to Fire Detection Control and Indicating Equipment (FDCIE) including, Emergency Warning and Intercom System (EWIS) panels, Fire Fan Control Panels (FFCPs) and sprinkler systems for non – ACTF&R personnel.

UNDERPINNING LEGISLATION

The information in the following guideline has been compiled based on the legislative requirements for access to Fire Detection Control and Indicating Equipment (FDCIE) in the ACT. This is covered under section 190 of the Emergencies Act 2004 (ACT).

Section 190 Interfering with fire appliance, hydrant, alarm etc.

- (1) A person commits an offence if the person does something to, or near, a fire appliance that prevents or hinders the effective use of the appliance.*
- (3) A person commits an offence if the person does anything to a fire alarm that prevents or hinders the effective use of the fire alarm.*
- (4) This section does not apply if the person has the permission of a member of the fire and rescue service, a member of the rural fire service or a police officer to do the thing.*
- (6) An offence against subsection (1), (2) or (3) is a strict liability offence.*

POLICY

Fire detection control and indicating equipment (FDCIE), including the fire indicator panel (FIP) any sub indicator panel (SIP) or mimic panel of a building's fire alarm system and sprinkler systems that are connected to the ACTF&R fire alarm network are deemed to be fire appliances.

Operation of this equipment is not permitted by any persons for any reason other than:

- On duty ACTF&R officers,
- The testing or maintenance of the fire alarm system by competent persons (fire service industry trained and accredited professional working for an accredited fire service company),
- For the purposes of the building owner/manager or the building's emergency control organisation (ECO) either:
 - Gaining access to the EWIS component of a combined FIP/EWIS; or
 - Shutting down a HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) system.

Responsibility for any subsequent outcomes associated with the allowable activities of the building owner or ECO lies with the building owner/manager or ECO who initiated such activities.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION

For further information or clarification please consult the original legislation or contact the ACTF&R Community Safety Section (email ACTFRFireSafety@act.gov.au).

AVOIDANCE OF FALSE ALARMS

Nuisance or false alarms can be caused by cooking, smoking, aerosol sprays, steam, and many other things. In many cases these alarms are due to inadequate ventilation or extraction systems and or the positioning of detectors near the cause of the false alarm. Preferred solutions for nuisance alarms are to locate the smoke detector away from the potential source of the alarm or to provide adequate air extraction. In some cases, these measures are not sufficient or possible. In these circumstances the Australian Standard AS 1670.1 allows for Fire Detection Alarm System configurations which may prevent nuisance alarms. These can include an Alarm acknowledgement facility, an Alarm delay facility, or an Alarm verification facility. Further information on these configurations is available in the standard. Isolation of a device or zone should not be considered a viable long-term strategy for dealing with nuisance alarms.

ISOLATION FACILITIES

An isolation facility to enable a temporary zone/device isolation for the purpose of preventing spurious alarms is not permitted. All isolations are to be made by a fire service industry trained and accredited professional working for an accredited fire service company.

USE OF EMERGENCY WARNING INTERCOM SYSTEM

During an emergency it is permitted for the Emergency Control Organization (ECO) to utilize the EWIS system to carry out their emergency response procedures. Emergency Response Procedures should be developed for identified emergencies by the buildings Emergency Planning Committee. Further information is provided in AS 3745-2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities. The ECO, building manager or fire wardens etc. must not attempt access the FIP or attempt to reset the alarm during a fire alarm event. Resetting the alarm will not prevent ACTF&R attendance.

PERMISSION SECTION 190, PART 4

Under the Emergency Act 2004 (ACT), Section 190, Part 4 permission can be granted to operate the FDCIE by a member of ACT Fire & Rescue. This permission only extends to fire service industry trained and accredited professionals working for an accredited fire service company.

RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Related legislation and documents

Building Act 2004 (ACT)

Building Regulation 2008 (ACT)

Emergencies Act 2004 (ACT)

Emergencies Regulation 2004 (ACT)

AS 3745-2010 Planning for emergencies in facilities

National Construction Code (NCC)



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