

# Supported Residential Services Fire safety & Emergency Management Proprietor obligations

December 2007

Since 1991, there have been a total of 15 fire-related fatalities in Victorian Supported Residential Services (SRS). It is important to ensure that all SRS and their staff have the capacity to effectively respond to emergencies.

## SRS Proprietor responsibilities

In any residential care facility, proprietors must regard fire safety and emergency management as a priority, ensuring all necessary measures are in place to reduce the impact of a fire or emergency event on residents. These measures include maintaining both the fabric of the facility and onsite equipment, as well as availability of suitably trained staff being able to take immediate and appropriate action to ensure the safety of all persons present at the facility. SRS proprietors have a responsibility to ensure a safe environment is provided for residents. Some of the minimum standards for how a safe environment can be provided for residents in relation to fire safety and emergency management are detailed below:

## SRS facility fabric and onsite equipment

In relation to fire safety, it is expected that SRS proprietors ensure the routine maintenance of basic fire safety provisions such as:

- Fire alarms and warning systems
- Automatic fire sprinklers
- Fire extinguishers and manual fire fighting equipment, and staff appropriately trained in the use of this equipment
- Emergency exits

**The full fire safety requirements are set out in the *Building Act 1993* and *Building Regulations 2006*.** Your Local Government office can provide advice on your obligations relating to fire safety compliance with the Building Act and Regulations.

## SRS emergency procedures for ensuring a safe work place

In an emergency situation at any work place, including SRS, it is important that staff are able to take immediate and appropriate action to ensure the safety of all persons present at the facility. It is expected that SRS proprietors ensure the development of emergency procedures such as:

- Emergency contact lists (police, fire, ambulance, poisons information, resident doctors, hospital etc)
- Floor and site plans detailing the location of building safety features (fire extinguishers and warning systems, designated assembly areas)
- Emergency services contact details
- Staff appointed with key duties and responsibilities in an emergency
- How to proceed to the designated assembly areas

**Under the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, employers have an obligation to provide and maintain a safe workplace.** This obligation extends to all people at the workplace, whether they are employees or not. Developing an emergency management plan contributes to the duty of providing a safe working environment. WorkSafe Victoria is the regulator for occupational health and safety law.

## Department of Human Services Support Strategy

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will be implementing a strategy to help support SRS in meeting their obligations concerning fire safety and emergency management requirements, and to build SRS sector capacity for responding to emergency events. Access to relevant resources and training has also been identified as a priority, and the department will be investing in these areas to support proprietors in meeting their obligations relating to fire safety and emergency management planning.

## DHS Supports for proprietors

In early 2008, the department will provide further information on the following proprietor supports to be provided:

**Training** - Development and delivery of a training course on Emergency Response Procedures initially for all pension-level SRS Proprietors and Personal Care Coordinators, and later made available to all SRS staff.

**Resources** - A guide on how to develop an emergency management plan for your SRS.

Certified practitioners that meet the requirements of relevant Australian Standard for emergency management planning will develop the training and resource guide.

**Monitoring** - DHS will be making some changes to our monitoring practices, for instance, requesting that proprietors provide documentation demonstrating compliance with fire safety requirements in the Self-Assessment document prior to renewal of registration.

Further information regarding the DHS support strategy can also be obtained by contacting:

50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

Ms Danielle Williams

Phone (03) 9096 7467

Email [Danielle.Williams@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Danielle.Williams@dhs.vic.gov.au)

## Proprietor Resources:

Copies of the relevant legislation can be found at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>.

## SRS facility fabric and onsite equipment

**The full fire safety requirements are set out in the *Building Act 1993* and *Building Regulations 2006*.**

This includes the obligation to prepare an *annual essential safety measures report* indicating the maintenance details of all safety measures applicable to the premises. Your Local Government office can provide advice on your obligations relating to fire safety compliance with the Building Act and Regulations.

You can find your Local Government contact details on [www.dvc.vic.gov.au](http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au) or telephoning 03 9096 7467 for assistance.

## SRS emergency procedures for ensuring a safe work place

WorkSafe Victoria is the regulator for occupational health and safety law and can provide further advice on emergency management planning. WorkSafe have published a Guidance Note titled *Emergency Management – Developing a plan for a small organisation*, available on the WorkSafe website [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) or to request a copy, please telephone WorkSafe on 1800 136 089.

The relevant Australian Standard 3745 sets out the requirements for the development of procedures for the controlled evacuation of building, structures and workplaces during emergencies and establishes guidelines. Further information can be found by contacting Standards Australia on 1300 654 646 <http://www.saiglobal.com/online/autologin.asp>

## DHS SRS Program contact numbers

Barwon South West Region  
03 5226 4540

Gippsland Region  
03 5177 2500

Eastern Metro Region  
1300 360 452

Loddon Mallee Region  
03 5434 5555

Grampians Region  
03 5333 6669

Hume Region  
03 5722 0555

North & West Metro Region  
1300 360 408

Southern Metro Region  
1300 555 526