

## **Information for Building Owners and IQPs about Passive Fire Protection Systems**

Late last year the Fire Protection Association New Zealand (FPANZ) published a report entitled 'Determining Barriers to Industry Delivery of Fire Safe Buildings in New Zealand'. You can download a copy from [http://www.fireprotection.org.nz/publications/FPANZ\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://www.fireprotection.org.nz/publications/FPANZ_research_report.pdf).

The report discusses some investigations into the state of passive fire and smoke protection (PFP) systems which were found to be deficient in many cases. One of the recommendations in the report is to improve industry awareness of the importance of PFP.

PFP includes all fire and smoke separations and consists of any walls, doors, windows and other features that form part of those separations. Where a fire or smoke separation forms part of the means of escape from fire (and when there is another fire related specified system in the building), it is a specified system and must be included on the building's compliance schedule with appropriate inspection and maintenance procedures.

PFP is as important to the safety of occupants of a building as a fire alarm or sprinkler system, and should be maintained to the same standard as when the separation was built.

Some common fire separation faults found in buildings are:

- Doors with inoperable self closing devices or not being latched closed
- Damage to the separation (especially lightweight timber framed construction) during use
- Penetrations for retro-fitted services unstopped
- Incorrect use of a fire stopping product or system.

It can be inferred from the findings of the FPANZ report that many building owners are being provided with Form 12A, and are subsequently supplying a Building Warrant of Fitness, despite there being defects in the PFP.

### **What does this mean for Building Owners**

Because PFP is part of a specified system, the building owner is required to:

- provide all required information to the Building Consent Authority to enable the compliance schedule to be created (for new buildings and alterations to specified systems in existing buildings)
- ensure that PFP is inspected and maintained in accordance with the compliance schedule
- ensure the PFP continues to perform to the level at which it was installed.

It is recommended:

- that PFP features are identified in the compliance schedule by showing which separations are fire or smoke rated and part of the means of escape on a floor plan of the building
- that building owners ensure that the IQP does verify that all inspection and maintenance procedures stated on the compliance schedule have been carried out before providing a Form 12A stating this.

## **What does this mean for IQPs**

Because PFP are specified systems, IQPs are required to:

- inspect those fire and smoke separations that form part of a building's means of escape as specified on the compliance schedule and
- provide a Form 12A to the building owner where the inspection and maintenance procedures stated on the compliance schedule for the fire and smoke separations have been carried out.

For further information and guidance see:

- The Department of Building and Housing:  
<http://www.dbh.govt.nz/bofficials-compliance-schedules>
- Codewords, at:  
<http://www.dbh.govt.nz/UserFiles/File/Publications/Building/Codewords/pdf/codewords30.pdf>
- Building Owners Building Warrant of Fitness Manual available from:  
<http://www.bnets.co.nz/BWOFS/index.htm>