



Fire and Emergency Services (FES) Commissioner's
Operational Requirement Guideline (ORG)

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Authorised: Superintendent Built Environment Branch

ORG 9: Emergency Lifts

1. Intent

The use of an emergency lift provides an option for firefighters to transport firefighting equipment closer to the fire floor and to supplement evacuation of mobility impaired occupants.

2. Operational Requirement

The FES Commissioner requires the following:

- i. the emergency lift is connected to a standby power supply system,
- ii. the emergency lift is identified at the ground level lift lobby,
- iii. all building lifts return to the ground level (if applicable) for firefighter use only,
- iv. at least two lift operating keys are available on site at the Fire Control Room or Centre for use by firefighters.

Consultation with the DFES Built Environment Branch is required for any deviations from the points above or if clarification is required.

3. Reason

The use of a lift, if deemed safe to do so by firefighters at an incident, may provide an efficient option to transport equipment to a floor near the fire and/or be used as a supplementary evacuation route for occupants who need assistance.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that Australians are increasingly living in apartment buildings. The number of persons aged 65 and above in Australia is also increasing [1]. The ability of occupants (particularly the aged) to conduct self-evacuation is consequently becoming problematic for firefighters during an incident.

Firefighting operations in tall buildings presents a challenge because firefighters typically need to move equipment vertically in the building. The equipment is heavy and can be cumbersome to carry in the stairwell, particularly if occupants are using the same stairway for evacuation. Further complications occur if occupants require assistance to use the stairway.

4. Risk Management

DFES defines risk as: 'The threat that an event or activity adversely affects our ability to achieve business and operational objectives or the failure to exploit opportunities to maximise stakeholder value.'

In the event of a building fire, there is a moderate risk that the provision of a poorly designed, installed or maintained emergency lift will:

- i. present limitations on the ability of firefighters to access the location of the fire or trapped occupants,
- ii. inhibit the ability of occupants to access escape routes,
- iii. cause injury and death to occupants and/or firefighters.

The FES Commissioner's Operational Requirements are designed to help manage the risk.

5. Resources

Additional DFES emergency lift information for building owners, authorities having jurisdiction and fire safety practitioners is available in DFES technical notes and operational requirement documents:

<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/regulationandcompliance/buildingplanassessment/pages/publications.aspx>

<https://www.abcb.gov.au/Resources/Publications/Education-Training/Lifts-Used-During-Evacuation>

6. References

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics National Health Survey, First Results 2017-2018 and Demographic Statistics Jun 2018.

DFES Enterprise Risk Management Procedure (2018) Version1, Enterprise Risk.

National Construction Code Series (as amended) Volume One Building Code of Australia 'Class 2 to 9 Buildings', Australian Building Codes Board, ACT, Australia.