

AS 1851-2012 Licensing Requirements and Recommended Competencies

Source Link: [NSW Building Commission – Licensing requirements for building professionals under AS 1851-2012](#)

Australian Standard AS 1851-2012 sets the requirements for the routine service of fire protection systems and equipment. In NSW, the 2012 version of the standard (including all amendments) is applicable. From **13 February 2026**, all class 1b and class 2 to class 9 buildings in NSW must inspect and test essential fire safety measures in accordance with the standard. The requirements are set out under [Section 81 and Section 81A](#) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fire Safety) Regulation 2021.

Licensing and recommended competencies for each category of work in AS 1851-2012

AS 1851-2012 has 13 categories of fire safety measures, each with specific inspection, testing and maintenance schedules. The following section nominates the requirements for licensing and suggested competencies for each category. Where a licence category is nominated, the person doing the work must have that licence to contract to do the work, or, have a general building licence who then sub-contracts to the applicable licence.

The recommended unit of competency is a suggested qualification the person should have to demonstrate they are suitably qualified. The list of competencies is not exhaustive and is meant as a guide only.

For works over \$5,000, a builder's licence is required if the work is classified as residential building work under the Home Building Act.

1. Automatic fire sprinkler systems

This section covers:

- Wet pipe systems
- Dry pipe systems
- Deluge and water spray systems
- Pre-action systems

Required licence

Inspection and testing work do not require a licence.

The following licences are required when physical work is being done to the system (for example, changing a part):

- Plumbing, or
- Water plumbing or
- Water plumbing – fire protection systems or
- Water plumbing – Fire sprinkler systems.

Recommended units of competency

- CPCPFS3040 Conduct basic functional testing of water-based fire-suppression systems
- CPPFES2047 Inspect and test control and indicating equipment
- CPCPFS3042 Conduct annual routine service of complex water-based fire-suppression system
- CPCPFS3043 Conduct functional water flow testing.

Note: CPCPCM2043 Carry Out WHS Requirements, is a pre-requisite for CPCPFS3042 and CPCPFS3043.

2. Fire pumpsets

Required licence

There is no applicable licence category for this work. However, works which require physical work to be done to the fire pumpset is considered residential building work requiring a builder's licence if the work exceeds \$5,000 in value and is in a residential building.

Recommended units of competency

Certificate III in Fire Protection, or **Certificate III in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing**, or any engineering or construction or automotive related Certificate III, plus the following units of competency:

- CPCPFS3041 Inspect and test fire pumpsets.

3. Fire hydrant systems

Required licence

Inspection and testing work do not require a licence.

The following licences are required when physical work is being done to the system (for example, changing a part):

- Plumbing or
- Water plumbing or
- Water plumbing – fire protection systems.

Recommended units of competency

Certificate III in Fire Protection, or **Certificate II in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing**, or any engineering or construction or automotive related Certificate II or higher, plus the following units of competency:

- CPPFES2037 Inspect and test fire hydrant systems
- CPCPFS3043 Conduct functional water flow testing.

4. Water storage tanks for fire protection systems

Required licence

The following licences may be required when physical work is being done to the system, otherwise, no licence is applicable.

- Plumbing or
- Water plumbing or
- Water plumbing – fire protection systems.

Recommended units of competency

There are no units of competency for this.

There is no unit of competency for 5 yearly testing.

5. Fire detection and alarm systems

Required licence

There is no applicable licence category for this work.

Recommended units of competency

Certificate II in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing, or any engineering or construction or automotive related Certificate II or higher, plus the following units of competency:

- CPPFES2047 Inspect and test control and indicating equipment
- CPPFES2029 Conduct functional tests on fire detection, warning and intercommunication devices

There is no unit of competency for 5 yearly testing.

6. Special hazard systems

This section covers gaseous, aerosol and open nozzle water mist special hazard fire suppression systems.

Required licence

The following licences may be required when physical work is being done to the system, otherwise, no licence is applicable.

- Plumbing; or
- Water plumbing; or
- Water plumbing – fire protection systems.

For non-water related suppression systems:

- An extinguishing agent handling licence from the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board may be required. The board administers the zone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Regulations 1995 on behalf of the Australian Government.

Recommended units of competency

Certificate III in Fire Protection or **Certificate III in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing**, or any engineering or construction or automotive related Certificate II or higher, plus the following units of competency:

- CPPFES2025 Inspect, test and maintain gaseous fire-suppression systems.
- CPPFES2043 Apply regulations to prevent ozone depleting substance and synthetic greenhouse gas emissions
- CPPFES2047 Inspect and test control and indicating equipment
- CPPFES3044 Interpret installation requirements for gaseous fire-suppression systems
- CPPFES3045 Install gaseous agent containers and actuators,
- CPPFES3046 Decommission gaseous agent containers and actuators
- CPPFES3032 Conduct enclosure integrity testing.

7. Fire hose reels

Required licence

The following licences may be required when physical work is being done to the system, otherwise, no licence is applicable.

- Plumbing or
- Water plumbing or
- Water plumbing – fire protection systems.

Recommended units of competency

Certificate II in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing, or any engineering or construction related Certificate II or higher, plus the following units of competency:

- CPPFES2010 Inspect and test fire hose reels.

8. 9. Portable and wheeled fire extinguishers plus fire blankets

Recommended units of competency

Certificate II in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing, or any engineering or construction or automotive related Certificate II or higher, plus the following units of competency:

- CPPFES2020 Conduct routine inspection and testing of fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

10. Passive fire and smoke containment systems

Required licence

Passive fire systems can include a wide range of building elements, including windows, walls, floors, joints, access panels and framing.

The following licences may be required when physical work is being done to the system, otherwise, no licence is applicable:

- General building licence
- Carpentry
- Dry plastering
- Joinery.

Recommended units of competency

Certificate II in Fire Protection – Inspection and Testing, or any engineering or construction or automotive related Certificate II or higher, plus the following units of competency:

- CPPFES2039 Identify, inspect and test passive fire and smoke containment products and systems
- CPPFES2035 Identify, inspect and test fire and smoke doors.

11. Fire and smoke features of mechanical services (smoke hazard management systems)

Required licence for mechanical ventilation work

In NSW, any work on the mechanical ventilation system of a building must be done by a person with a mechanical services and medical gas work licence.

The definition of mechanical services is:

"The construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, maintenance, testing or commissioning of a mechanical heating, cooling or ventilation system in a building, which is associated with the heating, cooling or ventilation of that building and includes:

1. any valve, regulator, pipe, flue, tank, heating or cooling pipe or surface, boiler, burner, solid fuel heater, coil or other item that is used in the system
2. in the case of a cooling tower, any water pipe, valve, pump, automated dosing device or automated bleeding device or any other mechanical component that affects the cooling tower's cooling water flow rate or wastewater disposal
3. roof sheeting and roof flashing that is necessary for the purpose of any work described in this paragraph."

Unlike other licence categories, any testing work associated with mechanical services must be done by a licensed person.

Examples of testing and maintenance work in AS 1851-2012 requiring a mechanical services licence:

- Check that the damper is capable of operating from fully open to fully closed, and is clear of obstructions. Where the damper is not required to fully open or close, check that it is capable of operating between maximum and minimum positions.
- Ensure damper/s moves to its fire mode position upon removal of a power source.
- Drain any fluid that has accumulated in the air filter.

Recommended units of competency

UEERA0098 Inspect, test and repair fire and smoke control features of mechanical services systems.

12. Emergency planning in Facilities

Recommended units of competency

- PUAFER002 Ensure facility emergency prevention procedures, systems and processes are implemented
- PUAFER003 Manage and monitor facility emergency procedures, equipment and other resources.

13. Delivery Lay Flat hose

This is not considered an essential fire safety measure in NSW and is not required to be maintained.

Responsibilities of building owners under AS 1851-2012

From 13 February 2026, all class 1b and class 2 to class 9 buildings in NSW must have essential fire safety measures inspected and tested in accordance with AS 1851-2012 (unless there is a performance solution in place).

[Link to Building Commission](#)

This page provides advice for building owners (including owners corporations, strata committees, and developers) and building managers about what they are required to do.

Last updated: 06 November 2025