

INFORMATION

Stanilite®

Photoluminescent exit signs



The Australian Building Codes board have advised their intent to allow photoluminescent exit signs to be used as alternates to industry-standard internally illuminated emergency exit fittings, with effect from 1st May 2014.

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01 Commercial high rises

Whilst at first glance the simplicity of this technology may be appealing, their use has a number of significant constraints which impact both on energy efficiency and cost of ownership, including:

- Photoluminescent exit signs **must** have a dedicated, uninterrupted light source continuously illuminating the face of the sign. This dedicated light source **must** provide a minimum illumination level of 100 lux on the face of the sign at all times.
- An emergency luminaire must be located within 2 metres of the approach side of a doorway requiring an exit sign and at most changes of direction in the escape path (ie: where directional exit signs are normally used). Where photoluminescent exit signs are used in these situations they **must** have an emergency luminaire located at a maximum distance of 2 metres from the sign. Almost all internally illuminated exit signs have an emergency classification and hence do not require an additional emergency luminaire within 2 metres.

In addition to the cost of operating the dedicated light source required to “charge” the photoluminescent sign, its maintenance costs together with the added cost of testing and maintaining the adjacent emergency luminaire need to be taken into consideration in the economic discussion.

The ability of photoluminescent signs to absorb and to emit light energy is influenced by the cleanliness of the surface of the signs. Irrespective of whether or not a cleaning regime is nominated in the revised Building Code, building owners and managers have a duty of care to provide a safe environment for building occupants; ensuring that photoluminescent signs are clean and hence able to perform at the levels required by the Building Code falls into this area of duty of care.

Replacing an existing internally illuminated exit sign with a photoluminescent alternative, without adding the dedicated light source and in most cases an adjacent emergency luminaire, will render the building non-compliant and should be avoided.

National Workplace Health and Safety Laws, together with the Building Codes in each State, apply severe penalties for failure to comply.

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