



# ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES: FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEOPLE AND LIFE

PRINTABLE VERSION OF CONSOLIDATED PRESENTATION INCLUDING SELF GUIDED PROCESS

Presbytery and Property Services

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## INTRODUCTION

The following is a printable version of the Consolidated Presentation provided by Presbytery and Property Services regarding Essential Safety Measures. The information is provided with the ESM Self-Guided process first followed by the background information regarding ESMs.

## HOW DO WE START? ESM SELF GUIDED PROCESS

- Refer to the Property Services letter and information sent to your Church Council and this document.
- All available on Property Services website [victas.uca.org.au/resources/property-legal/property/](https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/property-legal/property/)  
see Forms & Resources  
see Key Information Sheets

## EARLY PREPERATION – GETTING ORGANISED

1. Gather Building related documentation available to the congregation such as building certificate of occupancy/Occupancy Permit, building permits/final inspection certificates, planning permit relating to change of use, major works documents.
2. Gather any building maintenance documentation and essential safety measures servicing and repairs documentation.
3. Place the gathered documents into a folder and order chronologically.

## CLEAR THE WAY: CHECK POINTS OF EXIT

1. Check all paths of travel including passageways towards the emergency exit doorways are free from obstructions i.e. pews, stacked chairs, furniture, uneven carpets, or damaged floor covering, general clutter, trip, and slip hazards.
2. Check all emergency exit doors are free from obstruction and clutter in and around the doorway, ensure that all emergency exit doors can swing fully open outwards and freely.
3. Check external discharge paths are free from obstruction by vegetation or stored items and do not lead into locked off areas. Check the paths trip hazards, uneven or damaged stairs and pavement.
4. Check external walkways maintain direct access to the emergency assembly point. This may include reviewing walkways, courtyards, and locked gates.
5. Paths of travel, location of exit signs and the emergency evacuation diagram must all be consistent

## DO YOU HAVE THE OCCUPANCY PERMIT

If the building was built or significantly altered after 1 July 1994, do you have the Occupancy Permit?

1. **Yes**, move to next stage.
2. **No** then follow these steps.
  - a. Contact local municipal council office (building department) for a copy of all building permits and occupancy permit. You may need:
    - to pay a fee for this service
    - a signed letter from Synod office authorising retrieval (see ESM Info pack sent to Church Councils or website)
    - Retrieval from municipal council office usually electronic – emailed or downloaded via a hyperlink

## DISPLAY THE OCCUPANCY CERTIFICATE

1. Place a copy of the Occupancy Certificate on the wall in clear display near to the main entrance (eg Church foyer).
2. Keep a printed copy of the Occupancy Permit with the Church Council's property records, and safely store the electronic copy. Please send a copy to [aesmr@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:aesmr@victas.uca.org.au)

## DO YOU HAVE A MAINTENANCE DETERMINATION

1. **Yes**, place a copy of your Maintenance Determination with your Church Council's property records and have this available for reference for all ESM contractors and authority inspectors. Please send a copy to [aesmr@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:aesmr@victas.uca.org.au)
2. **No (pre 1 July 1994 built)** then follow these steps. *The costs and process below are a once off cost and process and will not need to be repeated.*
  - a. Budget approximately \$2000 if the group of church buildings is small to medium and multiple church sites can be visited on the one day. Budget for more if a larger complex. Whilst discounted rates have been negotiated with Statcom Systems, Maintenance Determinations are unique to the building and costs will vary.
  - b. Engage a Registered Building Surveyor to visit your church property to prepare a Maintenance Determination and Schedule and advise if ESM modifications are required. It is highly recommended to engage the Statcom Systems Registered Building Surveyor (RBS).
  - c. Alternate to Statcom Systems, request a quotation for a Maintenance Determination and Schedule prior to engaging a Registered Building Surveyor of your choice. We anticipate those costs to be greater than the rates already negotiated with Statcom Systems. Property Services are available to assist with quote collation and comparison.
  - d. Place a copy of Maintenance Determination with your Church Council's property records. Forward a copy to [aesmr@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:aesmr@victas.uca.org.au)

## DO YOU REQUIRE ESM UPGRADES OR IMPROVEMENTS

This can only be determined for the unique building on the inspection and advice of a Registered Building Surveyor (RBS). Do not commence upgrades without RBS advice.

1. **No**, move to next stage.
2. **Yes**, engagement with contractors per advice of RBS. You will be required to provide the RBS advice to these contractors to enable them to make the modifications or improvements.
  - a. **Emergency lighting and exit signage** – Registered **Electrical Contractor** Use your trusted local registered electrician
  - b. **Fire extinguisher, Fire blanket and Hose reel** – Fire **Services contractor** such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chub, Wormald, FES, Geelong Fire Services.

- c. **Fire Hydrant - Fire certified Plumbing contractor**
- d. **Evacuation Diagram - Fire Services Contractor.** Statcom Systems provide this service, some drafting and architectural firms can provide these diagrams.
- e. **Fire Doors (if applicable) or Emergency Exit Doors - Fire Services contractor or Registered Commercial Builder** such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chub, Wormald, FES, Geelong Fire Services.
- f. **Smoke or Heat Detection - Fire Services contractor** such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chub, Wormald, FES, Geelong Fire Services.
- g. **Fire Indicator Panel - Fire Services contractor** such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chub, Wormald, FES, Geelong Fire Services.

## IS THE EVACUATION DIAGRAM CURRENT

Evacuation **Diagrams** must be updated every 5 years or when building improvements are made. There may be circumstances that require a new emergency assembly point, this would need to be reflected into an updated evacuation diagram.

Evacuation diagrams must comply to the Australian Standards, include the date of revision and the diagram must be printed in colour A3 size. ESM equipment locations and evacuation pathway must be displayed correctly on the evacuation diagram.

Evacuation diagrams must be specific to the location in the building, hence **you are here** printed onto the diagram. Therefore, a different diagram is required for each section of the building, the same diagram cannot be photo copied 10 times and then placed in 10 different locations.

1. Check your Evacuation Diagram now. Does it need updating (every 5 years or building has changed or does not comply with Australian Standards)?
2. **No**, move to next step - setup an ESM maintenance routine with an electrical contractor
3. **Yes**, Engage a contractor to update the evacuation diagrams. We recommend Statcom Systems to update the diagrams to Australian Standards. Drafting and Architectural firms can also provide this service.

## SETUP THE ESM MAINTENANCE ROUTINE WITH AN ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR (REC)

1. Engage your local and trusted Registered Electrical Contractor (REC) to undertake inspections with frequency determined by the Maintenance Determination or Occupancy Permit. The testing and inspections must be for all installed **emergency lights** and the **illuminated directional signs** and **illuminated exit signs**.
2. Have your REC supply an ESM electrical testing logbook.
3. Ensure the logbook is completed and signed by the REC.
4. Suggest Electrical Safety standards checks including switchboards can be completed when REC is on site for ESM testing.
5. **Best Practice.**
  - Keep your building electrically safe and have your electrician perform safety switch (RCD) and earth circuit tests regularly.
  - Conduct general switchboard safety inspection, all GPOs and switch plates.
  - Have your REC conduct an annual Infrared Thermography of the switchboard under load.
  - Note these best practice items are not a requirement of the ESM or the AESMR.

## SETUP THE ESM MAINTENANCE ROUTINE WITH A FIRE SERVICES CONTRACTOR

1. Engage your existing Fire Services Contractor to undertake inspections with frequency determined by the Maintenance Determination or Occupancy Permit. The testing, inspections and maintenance must be for all installed fire safety measures such as extinguishers, fire reel hoses, fire hydrants, smoke and heat detection, fire or smoke doors etc.
2. If you do not have a preferred contractor, obtain more than one quote from contractor such as EFFS, ALEXON, Chub, Wormald, FES, Geelong Fire Services.
3. Have your Fire Services Contractor supply an ESM inspection and testing logbook.
4. Ensure the logbook is completed and signed by the Fire Services Contractor.
5. **Best Practice.**
  - Do not permit the placement of furniture in front or around fire extinguishers and its signage.
  - Do not permit shelving, furniture, or storage to be placed directly under a sprinkler head, always allow a clearance of 1 meter between the sprinkler head and stored items.

## SETUP THE ESM MONITORING AND AUDIT

1. Notify the Presbytery of intention to commence the ESM compliance program and the pathway chosen, Presbytery encourages all congregations to use the services of Statcom Systems.
2. Engage Statcom Systems or the chosen contractor to undertake the ESM monitoring.
3. Statcom Systems will conduct quarterly visits to the church property and inspect ESM testing records of the Fire Services and Electrical contractors have been completed in accordance with the ESM Schedule and Australian standards. Statcom Systems will check that contractors have recorded the maintenance and inspections into the logbook. Any incomplete or outstanding tasks will be alerted to the contractor and the congregation via the Statcom Systems automated email system.
4. Statcom Systems will prepare log books at their first visit and provide observation report. Commence upgrades to ESMs only on the advice of Registered Building Surveyor.

## THE RED CABINET ON THE WALL

Recommend all UCA properties should have a red ESM cabinet affixed to the wall near to the main entrance. The cabinet is the central repository for all the ESM logbooks. You will have multiple log books (electrician, fire services contractor) as well as the Statcom Systems summary logbook.

Larger or complex church properties with interconnected buildings may require multiple cabinets. Liaise with Property Services or Statcom Systems regarding the number and placement of red cabinets for complex sites (if applicable).

Log books need to be available for inspection upon request of the Fire Brigade or Municipal Building Surveyor.

### **Best Practice.**

- The red ESM cabinet should be near to the main entrance and provides an indication to the Fire Brigade and Municipal surveyor that ESMs are more likely to be maintained and serviced.
- The location of the red ESM cabinet near to the main entrance makes it easy for the contractors to locate and update the logbooks. One central location assists with the preparation of the AESMR.

Recommend Statcom Systems supply and install **ESM cabinets** for convenience. ESM cabinets can be purchased from your nearest safety suppliers retailer (eg RSEA, Seton, SafetyQuip) but ensure the cabinet is fit for purpose (holes for fixing to wall and depth for quantity of log books).

## WHO IS PERMITTED TO UNDERTAKE ESM WORKS

- Only qualified persons should undertake repairs to ESM fixtures, fittings and equipment.
- Your local handyman, domestic builder or domestic plumber are NOT permitted to undertake repairs if they do not hold the appropriate licence to perform those repair works. In the event builders or plumbers are required, they must be licenced for commercial building work as Church buildings are commercial buildings. Domestic licences are not applicable.
- The work of fire and building safety is for specialists who are trained, certified, and registered within their profession or trade.

## CLEAR THE WAY AGAIN - THE MONTHLY DOOR INSPECTION

Checking emergency exits for egress and discharge is a monthly task. This task can be undertaken by a member of the church council or delegated responsible person. The checks will need to be recorded into the Exit Door logbook the same as any other ESM check into its respective logbook.

1. Check all paths of travel including passageways towards the emergency exit doorways are free from obstructions i.e. pews, stacked chairs, furniture, uneven carpets, or damaged floor covering, general clutter, trip, and slip hazards.
2. Check all emergency exit doors are free from obstruction and clutter in and around the doorway, ensure that all emergency exit doors can swing fully open outwards and freely.
3. Check external discharge paths are free from obstruction by vegetation or stored items and do not lead into locked off areas. Check the paths trip hazards, uneven or damaged stairs and pavement.
4. Check external walkways maintain direct access to the emergency assembly point. This may include reviewing walkways, courtyards, and locked gates.
5. Record the monthly exit door inspection into the logbook.

## PREPARING THE ANNUAL ESM REPORT

On each anniversary date of the Occupancy Permit or the Maintenance Determination, prepare an Annual Essential Safety Measures Report (AESMR). 12 months' evidence of testing is required to complete an AESMR and there must be no outstanding compliance items. The AESMR must be in the prescribed form.

Statcom Systems is a recommended provider who can supply the service to prepare the AESMR. They will review quarterly testing compliance and visit the site around the anniversary date to inspect the buildings for compliance and sight the maintenance recorded in the logbooks.

The AESMR can be completed and signed by the Building Owner or a person signing for the building owner. This person takes responsibility for the AESMR and gives an undertaking as part of the report. Property Services recommends Statcom Systems is engaged for the preparation and sign off of the AESMR. It is not recommended that any church council member takes on this responsibility and it is best that issuing of the AESMR is passed onto a Fire Services Professional such as Statcom Systems.

Once the AESMR is signed and received follow the below process.

1. Copy and scan the AESMR.
2. Place a copy of AESMR in the red ESM cabinet.
3. Keep a printed copy within the church council's property records.
4. Digitally store the scanned image.
5. If NOT utilising Statcom Systems forward a copy of the AESMR to the Presbytery office and Synod Property Services [aesmr@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:aesmr@victas.uca.org.au)

## CONTRACTOR AGREEMENTS FOR ONGOING SERVICE

1. All ESM contractor arrangements should be reviewed annually to ensure ongoing testing is carried out in accordance with the Occupancy Permit or Maintenance Determination.
  2. Where the congregation is satisfied with contractor service ongoing/rollover arrangements provide convenience.
  3. Church Councils are invited to be part of a tender process for maintenance/testing contractors. Please complete the ESM Maintenance Contractor plus 'Test & Tag' Tender Enquiry form supplied in the ESM Info pack sent to all Church Council secretaries.
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# INFORMATION ON ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES (ESMS)

## WHY DO WE NEED ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES?

- For the Preservation of People and Life
- They are the safety features required in a building to protect occupants in the event of a fire or emergency event.
- First line of defence in an emergency.
- And yes, we have had fires in UCA buildings.

## WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES?

- The term 'essential safety measure' is defined in Part 15 of the Victorian Building Regulations 2018 and includes items listed in Schedule 8 of the Regulations, such as:

air handling systems (used for smoke hazard management)

exit doors

early warning systems

emergency lifts

emergency lighting

emergency power supply

emergency warning systems

exit signs

fire control centres

fire curtains and doors

fire extinguishers

fire detection and alarm systems

fire hydrants

fire isolated stairs

fire rated materials

fire windows

mechanical ventilation (incorporate a cooling tower or hot or warm water system)

fire isolated passageways and ramps

paths of travel to exits

smoke alarms

smoke control systems

sprinkler systems



## ESSENTIAL SAFETY MEASURES?

- Mandated by Federal and State acts/regulations (the Law).
- ESMs are determined by Registered Building Surveyor (RBS).
- Compliance ensures safe building egress (getting people out) and operational fire fighting capability at the time of need.
- Each building has its own unique list of ESM items - unique by type, quantity, installation and level of servicing.
- ESMs include other items which have been determined by the Registered Building Surveyor as an ESM (eg result of alternative solution). Such additions will be listed on the building's Occupancy Permit and/or Maintenance Determination.
- ESMs are to be maintained regardless of whether a building is occupied or unoccupied eg lockdowns. An increased risk of fire can occur in an unoccupied building – testing ESMs is an essential service.

## WHAT BUILDINGS DO ESMS APPLY TO?

- ESMs apply to commercial and public buildings.
- Essential safety measures apply to all buildings apart from a house or outbuilding. Building Classifications are under the National Construction Code (NCC).
- Therefore they do not apply to a manse unless the house is not being used as a place of residence eg office, medical rooms.



### Class 9

Public buildings – includes three sub-classifications:

- Class 9a – healthcare buildings such as hospitals and day surgery clinics
- Class 9b – buildings where people assemble for social, political, theatrical, religious or civic purposes, e.g. schools, universities, sports facilities, night clubs
- Class 9c – aged care facilities.



### Class 6

Buildings where retail goods are sold or services are supplied to the public, such as shops or restaurants. This class may include:

- hairdressing salon
- public laundry
- shopping centre
- funeral parlour
- showroom.

## WHY ARE CHURCH COUNCILS RESPONSIBLE FOR ESMS?

### *UCA Regulations and Responsible Body*

- Responsible body means any body of the Church to which specific responsibilities are assigned by the Constitution or by any UCA Regulation, bylaw or rule;
- 4.1 Responsible body means a body that is responsible for the management and administration of property, and which either itself carries out those responsibilities or appoints another body to undertake them either in whole or in part;
- 4.4.1 Subject to the UCA Regulations, the by-laws of the Synod and the rules of Presbytery, **the Church Council shall be responsible for the management and administration of all property of the Church acquired or held for the use of the Congregation ...**



## WE ALREADY DO OHS. IS THIS THE SAME AS ESM?

- ESM and OHS are not the same, BUT both support the protection of people in buildings.
- ESMs are installations, fixtures and fittings in a building that support persons in an emergency evacuation.
- OHS relates to anything that may cause injury or harm to persons.
- ESMs and OHS come under different legislation.
- The OHS Act seeks to protect the health, safety and welfare of persons in a workplace. It also aims to ensure that the health and safety of the public is not put at risk by work activities. Churches, halls, shops and kindergarten's are all workplaces.
- Continuous access to exits and paths of travel in the event of an emergency is a requirement under both OHS legislation and the Building Regulations.
- 'Test and tag' of portable electrical items is under OHS legislation in making a workplace safe.

## WHAT MUST WE DO - OVERVIEW

### Owner's responsibilities

- Maintain ESMs so that the ESM fulfils its purpose.
- Ensure that ESMs have been inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the Occupancy Permit or Maintenance Determination.
- Maintenance records must be kept and made available.
- This includes a record of rectification of deficiencies.

### Occupier's responsibilities (tenant if rented)

- Responsible for continuous access to exits and paths of travel prepared for an emergency.
- Ensure no interference with the ESMs.
- Note: new commercial lease arrangements where UCA is landlord can recover the cost of testing ESMs from the tenant – Owner remains responsible.

There are two distinct pathways in setting up your ESM program:

**Occupancy Permit** - Testing your ESMs in accordance with the ESM schedule from your Occupancy Permit

OR

**Maintenance Determination** - Testing your ESMs in accordance with the ESM schedule from your Maintenance Determination

### **Step 1**

#### ***ESM Schedule from Occupancy Permit***

- **For buildings built after 1 July 1994:** display your Occupancy Permit in the foyer of the building.
- An Occupancy Permit is a document that confirms your Building Surveyor is satisfied that the new building is suitable for occupation. Additional parts of the building upgraded after 1 July 1994 may also have Final Inspection Certificates.
- An Occupancy Permit issued after 1 July 1994 will specify the ESMs and their required maintenance schedule.

### **OR Step 1**

#### ***ESM Schedule from Maintenance Determination***

- **For buildings built before 1 July 1994** where no upgrades have been undertaken:
- Obtain a Maintenance Determination from a **Registered Building Surveyor** who will determine your ESM Maintenance Schedule.
- A Maintenance Determination and Schedule sets out the level of performance required to enable the ESM to fulfil its purpose and the frequency and type of maintenance required.

## Step 2

### **Maintain your ESMs according to ESM Schedule**

- Install and maintain the equipment for testing of ESMs in accordance with either your Occupancy Permit ESM Schedule or Maintenance Schedule.
- Keep records in a log book of all ESMs maintenance and repair work.
- Church Council to engage qualified contractors for the testing, repair and replacement of items such as emergency and exit lighting, fire hydrant systems, fire hose reels and portable fire extinguishers. Statcom Systems do not provide these services.

## Step 3

### **Annual ESM Report (AESMR)**

- On each anniversary date of the Occupancy Permit or the Maintenance Determination, prepare an Annual Essential Safety Measures Report (AESMR). 12 months' evidence of testing is required to complete an AESMR and there must be no outstanding compliance items. The AESMR must be in the prescribed form.

### **AESMR – Sign off**

- Property Services recommends the engagement of a contractor (such as Statcom Systems) for the sign off of the AESMR, a legal document, as they have the required experience. The AESMR does not need to be signed by a Registered Building Surveyor.
- An AESMR is signed off where all reasonable steps to ensure that all ESMs have been maintained in a state that enables them to fulfil their purpose and ESMs have been inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with the Occupancy Permit or Maintenance Determination.

## PROPERTY SERVICES AND PRESBYTERY SUPPORT

- ESM Letter sent to all Church Councils.
- Presbytery and Property Services available for advice.
- ESM information sessions.
- Discounted rates with Statcom to assist with Annual Report, monitoring, log books, access to web based portal.
- Assistance with contractors who perform the testing, maintenance and repairs – seeking response from Church Councils for collective tender/procurement, including test and tag.
- Property Services Development Managers and Project Managers will assist in setting up your ESM program at the conclusion of new constructions.
- Available to assist with new retail lease negotiations where costs of ESM can be passed to tenant. Landlord remains responsible for ESMs.
- Property Services can assist with discussions with Uniting regarding ESMs.
- We will continue to review ESM log books as evidence of ESM maintenance during site visits.

## IN FUTURE

- AESMRs will become standard attachments for property applications to Lease Commercial Buildings and for Church Renovations/Developments.
- ESM costs should become standard items in congregation's annual budgets and forecasts.

### Closing comment:

**Remember, *only* a Registered Building Surveyor may identify the ESMs for your building and prepare the ESM Maintenance Determination and Schedule if there is not an existing Occupancy Permit that sets out the ESMs.**