July 2024

**Design Guidance Note: Fire Engineering Design for New Zealand Public Hospitals**

**Frequently asked questions**

1. **Who approved the Design Guidance Note: Fire engineering design for New Zealand public hospitals (Fire DGN)?**

The Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) Executive Leadership Team approved the Design Guidance Note on 23 April 2024.

1. **What is the purpose of the Fire DGN?**

The purpose is to provide guidance to fire engineers engaged on projects to build new or make alterations to existing public hospital buildings. It provides the minimum standards of fire safety and design procedures that are expected by Health NZ.

1. **Is the Fire DGN just for new developments?**

The Fire DGN is to be followed for the design of new public hospital buildings and wherever possible for the alteration of existing public hospital buildings, whether leased or owned.

1. **What is the objective of the Fire DGN?**

The objective of the Fire DGN is to improve consistency and certainty in hospital design of hospitals with managed evacuation procedures.

1. **What are the benefits of adopting the Fire DGN for Health NZ?**

The key benefits of adopting the Fire DGN for Health NZ is the acceleration of capital projects by removing the areas of ambiguity in design, and standardisation of design which will streamline development processes and reduce the risk of time and cost overruns.

1. **When will the Fire DGN be operative?**

The Fire DGN will be operative from 1 July 2024. From this date, the Fire DGN will apply to the design of all new public hospitals, in the concept design stage or earlier.

1. **Will the Fire DGN be applied retrospectively to existing hospital buildings?**

No, the Fire DGN will not be applied retrospectively to existing hospital buildings. Health capital projects that have already had their designs approved will not be required to undergo any redesign.

1. **How was the Fire DGN developed?**

A working group with representatives from Health NZ, MBIE, FENZ, and Fire Engineers was established in late 2022 to develop the draft DGN. Targeted consultation was completed in August 2023 and formal endorsement of the Fire DGN has been received from MBIE and FENZ.

1. **What are the cost implications of adopting the Fire DGN?**

Based on fire design being considered early in the design process, there should be no cost implications in adopting the Fire DGN.

1. **Where can I find the Fire DGN?**

The Fire DGN can be accessed using [here](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/health-services-and-programmes/infrastructure-and-investment/information-for-industry/#publications).

1. **Is there a continuous improvement pathway?**

Design Guidance is updated on a 3-5 year cycle to keep up to date with changing technological, social and environmental conditions, and will be continuously improved by feedback loops (including post occupancy evaluation and alternative solutions approved by the design governance body). However, for this Fire Engineering Design Guide an initial review will take place a year after the guidance is released.

1. **What is the difference between AusHFG and the NZ DGN?**

NZ participates in [AHIA](https://healthfacilityguidelines.com.au/australasian-health-infrastructure-alliance), who develop the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines [(AusHFG)](https://healthfacilityguidelines.com.au/aushfg-parts) with input from user groups and clinicians. The NZ DGN contains relevant NZ specific guidance where necessary (for example, to take into account our cultural, social, climatic, and seismic requirements). This information is eventually captured in the AusHFG when each document is revised and updated.

**Questions or further assistance?**

Get in touch with the FDA via [facility.design@health.govt.nz](mailto:facility.design@health.govt.nz).