

# **Ministerial Building Standard MBS 003**

## **Fire safety in caravan parks and residential parks**

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## 1. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This Standard is published as a Ministerial Building Standard that forms part of the Building Rules under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the *Act*) and must be read in conjunction with the requirements of that Act and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017 (*Regulations*). It contains fire safety provisions that apply in new *caravan parks* and *residential parks* and those parts of existing *caravan parks* and *residential parks* being upgraded or modified to address fire safety risks that arise due to the predominant use of combustible materials in the construction of *caravans*.
- 1.2 The provisions in this Standard apply to *caravans* used as *recreational accommodation* and to *caravans* used as *permanent accommodation* but they do not apply to buildings and structures such as manufactured homes or cabins that are transported to site or built on-site and which are subject to the provisions of the *Building Code* and normal development assessment processes.
- 1.3 Under the *Act*, development approval is required for-
- (a) the layouts of new *caravan parks* and *residential parks*;
  - (b) alterations to site layouts and/or extensions to existing *caravan parks* and *residential parks*;
  - (c) any building work to buildings and structures covered by the provisions of the *Building Code*; and
  - (d) alterations to fire services and equipment (eg fire hydrants and fire hose reels).
- 1.4 When assessing a proposal to develop a new *caravan park*, *residential park* or to upgrade an existing park, consideration should be given to seeking the views of the fire authority where an alternative fire hydrant system to that in the deemed-to-satisfy provisions is proposed.
- 1.5 It is the responsibility of the park *owner* to ensure that-
- (a) separation distances and clearances are established and maintained to conform with the requirements of this Standard;
  - (b) the performance of fire safety services and equipment is maintained; and
  - (c) the council is notified when alterations are proposed to be made to site layouts, separation distances and/or fire services and equipment.

## 2. PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENT

- 2.1 To minimise the risk of injury and loss of life that could arise from fire in *caravan parks* and *residential parks*, each occupancy must be protected from fire spread from another occupancy by-
- (a) providing separation distances-
    - (i) between a *caravan* and any adjacent *caravans* (including attached *annexes*), and
    - (ii) between a *caravan* and any adjacent *tent*, building or structure; and
  - (b) providing access, water and equipment for fire-fighting purposes, suitable for-
    - (i) occupants to use to undertake initial attack on a fire appropriate to the fire hazard, and
    - (ii) where appropriate, the fire brigade to use during fire-fighting operations; and
  - (c) reducing potential fire hazards; and

- (d) providing occupants with *automatic* warning on detection of smoke so that they may evacuate in the event of a fire to a place of safety.

### 3. DEEMED TO SATISFY PROVISIONS

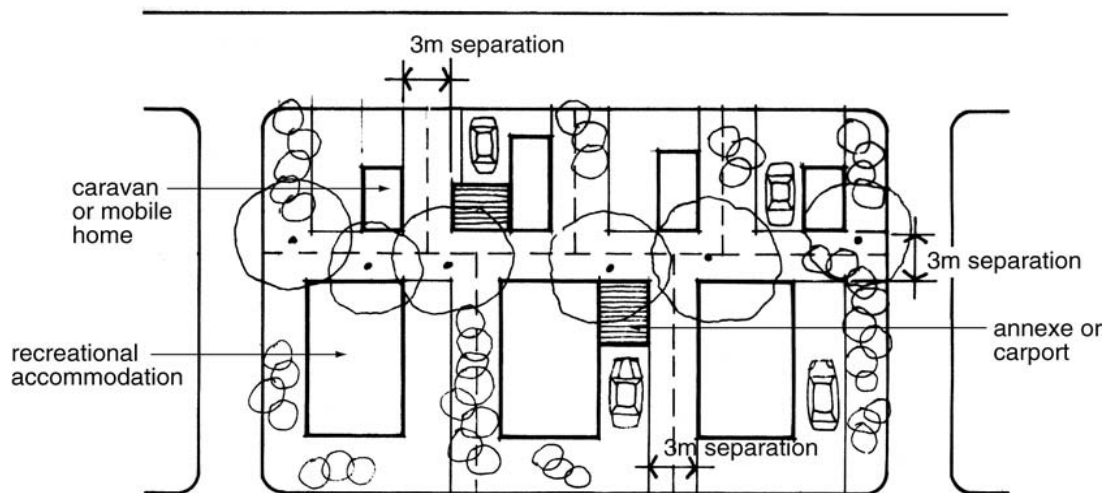
**3.1** Performance Requirement 2.1 can be satisfied by complying with the deemed-to-satisfy provisions in 3.2 to 3.6 below. A reference to an Australian Standard in this section is to the edition that is current for the purposes of the *Building Code* at the time of application.

#### 3.2 Separation distances for individual sites

**3.2.1** Sites in a *caravan park* and a *residential park* must not be linked by combustible construction and for individual sites a minimum separation distance of not less than 3 metres must be provided and maintained between adjacent *caravans* (including any attached *annexe*) as shown in figure 3.2.

**3.2.2** The 3 metre separation distance in 3.2.1 must also be provided and maintained between a *caravan* (including any attachment to it, such as an *annexe*, verandah or similar) and–

- (a) any *tent* on an adjoining site; and
- (b) any adjacent building or structure on an another site.



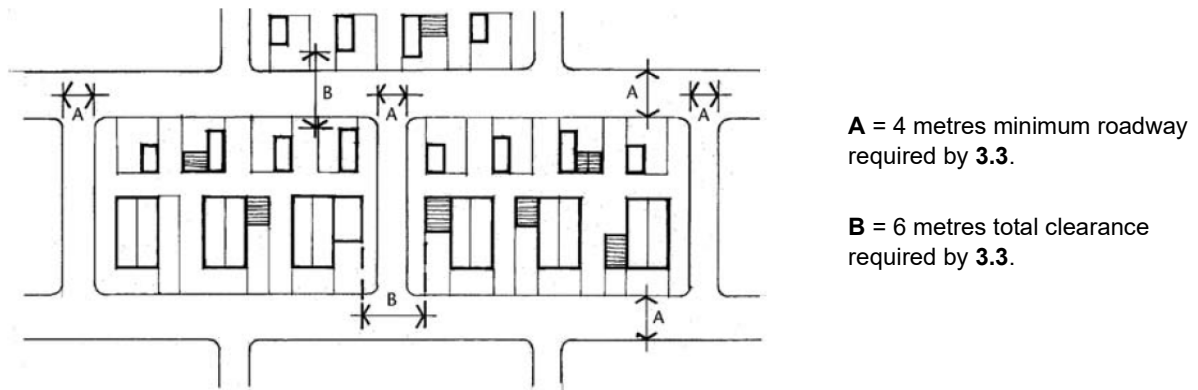
**Figure 3.2**

Showing separation distances required between individual sites.

#### 3.3 Clearance distances for united sites

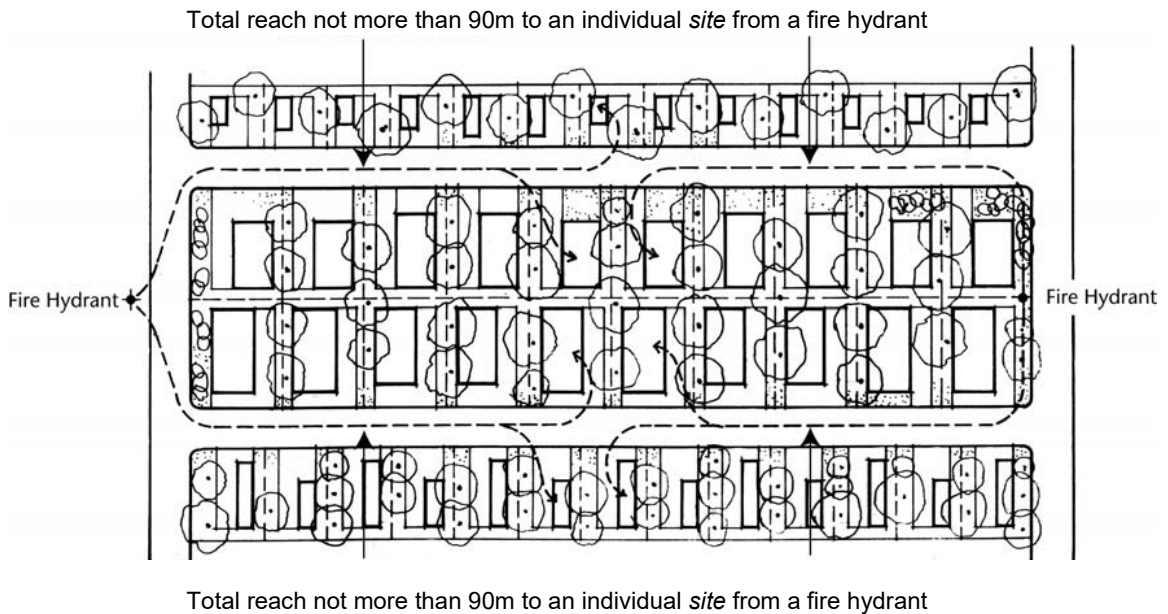
**3.3.1** For *united sites*, a clearance distance not less than 4 metres wide must be provided around each *united site*, and *caravans* and *tents* on sites adjoining the roadway must be set back 1 metre from the roadway to allow a total clear unobstructed space not less than 6 metres wide for emergency vehicle access as shown in Figure 3.3(a).

**3.3.2** a *united site* may exceed 1000m<sup>2</sup> if a fire hydrant system complying with 3.6.4 is provided that will serve each individual site on the *united site* and any sites adjacent to the *united site*.



**Figure 3.3 (a)**

Showing clearance distances required between *united sites*.



**Figure 3.3(b)**

Showing coverage of a fire hydrant located not more than 90 metres from individual *sites* on a *united site*.

### 3.4 Smoke Alarms

**3.4.1** Smoke alarms complying with the requirements of the *Building Code* for dwellings must be installed in all *permanent residential accommodation*.

**3.4.2** In *caravans*, smoke alarms required by 3.4.1 may be either-

- (a) connected to the consumer mains power; or
- (b) powered by a 10-year life non-replaceable, non-removable permanently connected battery.

**Note.** It is desirable that all types of sleeping accommodation have smoke alarms installed, however in caravans false alarms may be prevalent due to cooking in confined spaces and the installation of photo-electric (optical) smoke alarms with a 'hush' facility is recommended. This type of alarm can be isolated for a short period during cooking and will automatically reset.

### 3.5 Fire Extinguishers

**3.5.1** Fire extinguishers are required to be installed in *caravans* in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 47 of the Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2021 as per the extract below.

Regulation 47 – Caravans

- (1) A person must not use a caravan in the country unless an efficient fire extinguisher that complies with subregulation (2) is carried in the caravan.
- Maximum penalty: \$1 250
- (2) A fire extinguisher required under subregulation (1) must—
- (a) comply with Australian Standard 1841.5-2007: *Portable fire extinguishers—Part 5: Specific requirements for powder type extinguishers*; and
- (b) have a minimum classification and rating of 10B, as defined by Australian Standard 1850-2009: *Portable fire extinguishers—Classification, rating and performance testing*; and
- (c) be maintained in accordance with Australian Standard 1851-2012: *Routine service of fire protection systems and equipment*

### 3.6 Fire services and equipment

**3.6.1** Water and fire-fighting equipment must be available in a *caravan park* or *residential park* for use by the occupants in the event of a fire.

**3.6.2** The requirements of **3.6.1** can be met by one or more of the following-

- (a) fire hose reels complying with **3.6.3**, located to provide coverage to all individual *sites*; or
- (b) readily accessible, permanently connected garden hoses not less than 15 metres long equipped with spray nozzles, capable of providing a flow of not less than 20 litres per minute, located to provide coverage to all individual *sites*.

**3.6.3** Fire hose reels provided to satisfy **3.6.2(a)** must-

- (a) comply with Australian Standard *AS/NZS 1221 - Fire hose reels*; and
- (b) be located in readily accessible and visible positions that do not present a hazard to a potential user;
- (b) achieve the required coverage from a 4 metre hose stream issuing from a nozzle at the end of a hose not exceeding 36 metre in length laid on the ground; and
- (c) be installed in accordance with Australian Standard *AS 2441 - Installation of fire hose reels*.

**3.6.4** Fire hydrant systems provided to satisfy **3.3.2** must-

- (a) comply with the requirements of Australian Standard *AS 2419.1 - Fire hydrant installations - System design, installation and commissioning*, except that a reference to '4 hours' water supply in clause 4.2 of that standard is replaced with '2 hours';
- (b) where an on-site water storage facility is provided to supply the hydrant system, the capacity of the facility must be not less than 72 000 litres;

- (c) achieve the required coverage from a 10 metre hose stream issuing from a nozzle at the end of a 60 metre length of hose (laid on the ground around any obstructions), when connected to a pumping appliance located not more than 20 metres from the hydrant to which it is connected (ie a hydrant is located not more than 90 metres from each *site* as shown in **Figure 3.3(b)**); and
- (d) an access roadway not less than 4 metres wide is provided suitable for fire-fighting appliances to use from the park entrance to a hardstand area located within 20 metres of a fire hydrant serving the *united site*.

## 4 MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

### 4.1 Maintaining fire services and equipment

- 4.1.1 Fire-fighting equipment must be easily accessible and ready for use at all times.
- 4.1.2 Fire hose reels and fire hydrants installed in a *caravan park* or *residential park* are essential safety provisions that must be maintained and tested so that they continue to perform to a standard no less than the standard required at installation.
- 4.1.3 Maintenance and testing of fire hose reels and fire hydrants carried out in accordance with the provisions of *Ministerial Building Standard MBS 002* will satisfy the requirements of **4.1.2**.
- 4.1.4 In accordance with the requirements of regulation 94 of the *Regulations*, the *owner* must provide adequate proof annually to the relevant council, in a form determined by the Chief Executive, certifying that maintenance and testing of all essential safety provisions in the *caravan park* or *residential park* has been carried out.

## 5. FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION

### 5.1 Permanent residential accommodation

- 5.1.1 Where a *caravan* is used as *permanent residential accommodation*-
  - (a) the underside of the *caravan* must be enclosed with suitable materials to prevent the entry and accumulation of wind-blown debris beneath the *caravan*; and
  - (b) the storage of combustible or hazardous material is not permitted in spaces beneath the *caravan*.

### 5.2 Services

- 5.2.1 Gas installations must comply with the requirements of the *Gas Act 1997* and the *Gas Regulations 2012*, administered by the Office of the Technical Regulator, which requires compliance with *AS/NZS 5601.2 Gas installations in caravan parks and boats for non-propulsive purposes*.
- 5.2.2 Electrical installations must comply with the requirements of the *Electricity Act 1996* and the *Electricity (General) Regulations 2012*, administered by the Office of the Technical Regulator, which include requirements for the installation of earth leakage breakers to reduce risks to life safety.

## APPENDIX A – INTERPRETATION

**Act** means the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

**Annexe** means an attachment to a *caravan* used as an extension of the habitable area of that *caravan* and has walls and a roof constructed of flexible or rigid material which can be assembled or dismantled within 24 hours by no more than 2 persons.

**Automatic** has the same meaning as defined in the *Building Code*.

**Building Code** means Volume One and Volume Two of the National Construction Code published by the Australian Building Codes Board as amended from time to time.

**Caravan** means a *vehicle* capable of being towed or driven that is fitted out for habitation. For the purposes of this standard a *caravan* includes-

- a campervan;
- a mobile home;
- a trailer modified for camping (camper trailer); or
- any *annexe* attached to the *caravan*

**Caravan park** means land for the siting of *caravans* and *tents* or other *recreational accommodation* and associated facilities. It does not include any 'group dwellings' as defined in the *Regulations* under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

**Chief Executive** has the same meaning as defined in section 3 of the *Act*.

**Owner** means the owner of the *Caravan Park* or *Residential Park*.

**Permanent residential accommodation** means a *caravan*, building or manufactured home which is located on a *site* for 60 consecutive days or longer or a *caravan* that is hard wired to mains power and/or has a direct connection into the park's water supply and wastewater facilities.

**Readily removed** means that the *caravan* has wheels attached and is in a condition that it is able to be moved from a *site* under its own power or by being towed, within 24 hours of any attached services being disconnected from it.

**Recreational accommodation** - a *caravan* (including an *annexe*), *tent* or the like where persons sleep that is temporarily located in a *caravan park* or *residential park* (ie for less than 60 consecutive days) and which can be *readily removed*.

**Regulations** means the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017.

**Residential park** means land for the siting of manufactured homes and *caravans* for long term occupation, including *permanent residential accommodation* as defined above.

**Site** means for the purposes of this standard, means the area of land identified in the layout of a *caravan park* or *residential park* for the siting of *caravans* or tents.

**Tent** means any easily moved shelter of canvas or similar lightweight materials, supported by one or more rigid or semi-rigid structural members fastened to the ground (eg poles, ropes and pegs).

**United site** means, for the purposes of this document, a group of two or more adjoining *sites* which together total 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more in area.