

PURPOSE: This fact sheet outlines the applicable responsibilities and processes relating to fire protection of private property and buildings, from East Gippsland Water's perspective.

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BACKGROUND

Service Standards

East Gippsland Water (EGW) has performance obligations for its services as set out in its Customer Charter (EGW Policy No. 045). The Charter, which reflects the service standards set by the Essential Services Commission (ESC), includes (among other things) minimum standards for water services provided to EGW's customers. The water supply service standards include targets for; supply interruptions, water quality parameters, and minimum flow rates.

The current applicable minimum flow rate from an approved standard customer connection to a serviced property is 20 Litres per minute for a 20 mm dia. water supply connection, which varies depending on the size of the connection. For example, the minimum flow rate for a 32 mm connection is 60 L/min, rising to 160 L/min for a 50 mm connection. Note that there is no minimum water pressure target.

It should be noted that the water pressure and flow rate available to any particular property will vary according to the property's physical location, and the diurnal/seasonal demand influences that affect water pressure/flow within the reticulation system. It should also be noted that there can be interruptions to services, where water supply to properties may be temporarily unavailable or restricted.

Customer Connections

EGW controls applications for customer connections to its network through the Consent to Connect application (EGW Form No. 040). EGW's Policy No. 025, Customer Connections, defines approved standard customer connections. Non-standard services, for example; supplies by agreement and fire services, are exempt from these minimum standards.

EGW's responsibilities for maintenance generally end at the customer meter (for approved standard customer connections), and the property-owner is responsible from this point for all internal private plumbing works (the Victorian Building Authority is responsible for regulation of private plumbing works).

Fire Plugs

Section 165 of the Water Act 1989, provides that the Council may require EGW to install fire plugs on its water reticulation network, with maintenance of these fire plugs being at Council's cost. EGW is required to make water available from fire plugs but EGW is not required to make sure that water pressure is adequate for fire fighting.

In addition, the Water Supply Code of Australia (WSA 03-2011) identifies, in section 3.1.5, that EGW's water supply systems shall not be specifically designed for fire fighting capability.

Subdivisions and Land Development

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 is administered by the Responsible Authority (usually the Council), and EGW is a Referral Authority. Upon referral of a planning application (for

subdivisions and other land development proposals) to EGW by the Council, EGW will consider whether the proposed development can be serviced (to the above minimum standards) and what infrastructure may be required, including connection of new lots/developments to reticulated water supply (and/or sewerage). Other EGW requirements may be included, and some developments may not be able to be serviced. Where included in EGW's requirements, minimum sized water mains would generally be required to be installed by the developer, to meet the minimum service standards.

Where a proposed development or subdivision seeks to provide service standards over and above these minimum levels, the property owner or developer must make their own arrangements, at their cost (for example, if a particular development needs a higher standard of water quality, pressure or flow rate). EGW can provide information on the available level of service (for example, the water pressure and/or flow rate available at a particular location upon request (fees may apply).

EGW cannot require a development to be serviced over and above the minimum service levels – refer to the ESC's Guidelines for New Customer Contributions, available on their web site.

Note that the planning process, and EGW's determination of servicing requirements, usually occurs well before the building process is instigated by the property owner.

FIRE PROTECTION

EGW is not responsible for providing fire protection for private properties, and is not involved in setting the applicable fire protection standards or requirements, nor in implementing fire protection solutions.

Individual buildings must comply with the requirements of the Victorian Building Authority (VBA), relevant legislation and Municipal and Private Building Surveyors. Australian Standard AS2419.1, Fire Hydrant Installations, sets requirements for private building fire protection hydrant systems, including internal pressure and flow requirements for hydrants. These requirements apply to the building owner/occupier and are completely separate from the service standards that EGW is required to meet for the reticulated water supply system.

Note that the references in BCA and AS 2419 to 'hydrants' relates to the internal private fire protection system for a building, and is not to be confused with the 'fire plugs' that are installed on EGW's water reticulation network. In some circumstances, the street fire plug or approved fire service connection from EGW's water mains may be sufficient for fire protection for certain private properties/buildings without augmentation. If not, then the property-owner, developer or builder must ensure compliance with building requirements – for example, additional on-site water storage, booster pumping, or other infrastructure may be required to be installed on-site to provide fire protection for a building, at the owner's cost.

Property owners should seek early specific advice from their building designer/contractor, Municipal or Private building surveyor, CFA representative, insurance company or independent building consultant in relation to determining and complying with their own property's fire protection needs.

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