



File No. DOIA 2016/0782

17 JAN 2017

Ms Evans

[fyi-request-5129-d8c7213d@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-5129-d8c7213d@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear Ms Evans

Thank you for your email of 23 December 2016 requesting for the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*Please provide the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) operational methods that MBIE relied upon which shows that the NZFS cannot respond to spread of fire via external fire-fighting tactics e.g. water monitors, aerial appliances, etc, for new or existing buildings which do not meet Clause C3.8.*

As you note in your email, the related information to Building Code clause C3.8 (C3.8) is NZFS operational methods, which I can advise is what the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (the Ministry) used when developing C3.8. For this reason, the Ministry is only able to provide the following information in relation to your request.

The purpose of C3.8 is to achieve objective C1, that being to 'facilitate fire-fighting and rescue operations'. C3.8 requires the provision of safe conditions for fire-fighting internal to buildings not protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system where the floor area exceeds 5000m<sup>2</sup> or, the fire load exceeds 20TJ. This clause is intended to require the provision of either fire separations, ventilation or sprinklers to enable fires to be contained within a size that can be controlled by the Fire Service.

C3.8 only applies to buildings that are within 15m of their site boundary. Buildings closer than 15m do not have sufficient access for Fire Service vehicles to the perimeter of the building for external fire-fighting. For buildings greater than 15m to the site boundary, external fire-fighting can be provided to enable the external control of fire spread. Additionally, the distance of 15m from the site boundary is considered that, in most cases, if the building was left to burn without Fire Service intervention, there would be little risk of damage to neighbouring property and to control the potential of external fire spread due to flying debris or radiation.

The NZFS Emergency Vehicle Access Guidelines show the access requirements for an aerial appliance as requiring turning radius of 12.5m and carriageway width of 6m. Additionally, appliances cannot park adjacent to buildings due to risk of falling structure and debris. The Code of Practice for Fire-Fighting Water Supplies requires fire hydrants be a minimum 6m from the building. Therefore, to provide safe access for Fire Service vehicles and also safe operation of fire fighters to establish water lines and operate water streams and monitors, a distance of 15m is required between building and site boundary for external fire-fighting to be possible.

**Building, Resources & Markets**

15 Stout Street, PO Box 1473, Wellington 6140 New Zealand  
E [info@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:info@mbie.govt.nz) T +64 4 472 0030  
W [www.mbie.govt.nz](http://www.mbie.govt.nz)

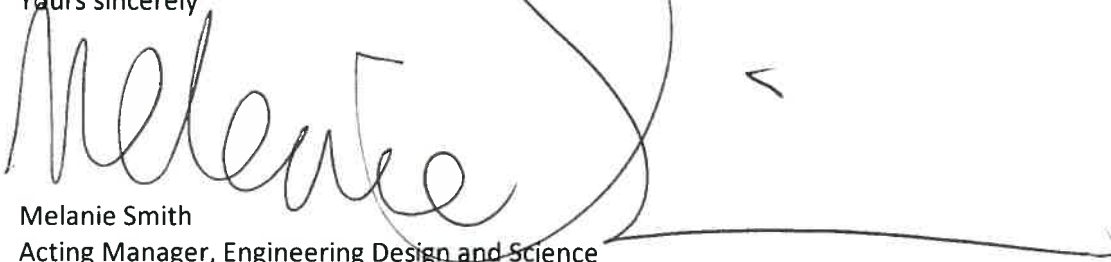
The NZFS Emergency Vehicle Access Guidelines and Code of Practice for Fire-Fighting Water Supplies can be found on the NZFS website <http://www.fire.org.nz/>.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision. The relevant contact details are:

The Ombudsman  
Office of the Ombudsman  
PO Box 10 162  
WELLINGTON 6143

0800 802 602  
[www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right. A small checkmark is visible to the right of the signature.

Melanie Smith  
Acting Manager, Engineering Design and Science  
Building System Performance  
Building, Resources and Markets