

FIRE SAFETY ADVISER

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* was introduced on 1 July 2008. The most significant reform in the regulation is the requirement for occupiers of high occupancy buildings, as defined under the regulation, to appoint and train a Fire Safety Adviser.

A Fire Safety Adviser is a person who holds an approved building fire safety qualification, issued within the last three years.

Approved building fire safety courses are made up of eight units of competency in Workplace Emergency Response within the Australian Quality Training Framework. They are:

- » PUAFER001 Identify, prevent and report potential facility emergency situations
- » PUAFER002 Ensure facility emergency prevention procedures, systems and processes are implemented
- » PUAFER003 Manage and monitor facility emergency procedures, equipment and other resources
- » PUAFER004 Respond to facility emergencies
- » PUAFER005 Operate as part of an emergency control organisation
- » PUAFER006 Lead an emergency control organisation
- » PUAFER007 Manage an emergency control organisation
- » PUAFER008 Confine small emergencies in a facility

Do I need to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser?

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* states that you are required to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser if the building is a Class 2, 3, 5, 6, 7b, 8, 9a or 9b building that is a workplace where 30 or more workers are normally employed.

Building Classifications:

- » A Class 2 building is a residential building containing two or more apartments or units.
- » A Class 3 building is a residential building such as a residential part of a motel, hotel or resort.
- » A Class 5 building is an office building.
- » A Class 6 building is a shop or other part of a hotel.
- » A Class 7b building is a storage facility or display area.
- » A Class 8 building is a laboratory or a factory.
- » A class 9a building is a health care building.
- » A class 9b building is an assembly building such as a night club.

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* also states that you are required to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser if the building is a Class 2 or 3 building that is more than 25 metres in effective height. Effective height as defined in the Building Code of Australia is the height to the floor of the topmost story from ground level. For buildings under this height, the number of works is irrelevant.

In addition, *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* states that you are required to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser if the building is a licensed premises that has been identified by the Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) as an at risk building.

This is a building that the QFES Commissioner is satisfied presents an unacceptable risk of overcrowding.

In multi-tenanted buildings where there are a number of tenancies employing 30 workers or more, each of those tenancies are required to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser. It is however acceptable for those tenancies to liaise with the Managing Entity of the building and appoint the same Fire Safety Adviser for the whole building. This solution allows all tenants to comply with the legislation and share the benefits of increased fire safety awareness.

Who is classified as a worker?

A person is considered a worker if they carry out work regardless of whether they do or do not receive payment. To be considered a worker, a person they must be employed or likely to be employed at the workplace for a total of 40 days during the current year. These 40 days do not need to be consecutive.

What duties can a Fire Safety Adviser undertake?

A Fire Safety Adviser is required to provide or arrange first response evacuation instruction, and evacuation coordination instructions.

In addition the Fire Safety Adviser may provide assistance to the occupier by:

- » Liaising with occupiers to ensure the development of the Fire and Evacuation Plan.
- » Liaising with occupiers to ensure the development of the Evacuation Sign and Diagram.
- » Reviewing the Fire and Evacuation Plan and Evacuation Sign and Diagram annually.
- » Monitoring the building's prescribed fire safety installation maintenance schedule and maintenance records and advise the occupier of discrepancies.

- » Liaising with QFES personnel during building inspections and if possible, being available at the time of inspection with access to all relevant maintenance records and documentation.
- » Coordinating the establishment and managing the Emergency Control Organisation where required.
- » Arranging or providing general evacuation instruction as well as first response evacuation instruction and evacuation coordination instruction.
- » Providing advice to the occupier of any possible breeches of the regulations.
- » Coordinating evacuation practices.
- » Performing the role of the Evacuation Coordinator if normally onsite during business hours.

If the Fire Safety Adviser is a member of staff, they could provide invaluable assistance to QFES personnel attending an incident in the building due to their comprehensive knowledge of the building.

Does the Fire Safety Adviser need to be a staff member?

There is no requirement for the Fire Safety Adviser to be a person on staff. However, QFES recommended that where practical the Fire Safety Adviser is an existing staff member as:

- » the occupier and staff have an easily accessible point of contact about fire safety matters.
- » a staff member Fire Safety Adviser is likely to have familiarity with the building and knowledge of protocols and fire safety arrangements internal to the organisation.
- » the Fire Safety Adviser is more easily accessible for coordination of fire safety arrangements.
- » the Fire Safety Adviser can be easily made aware of changes within the building, staff appointments or organisation change.
- » attending fire officers and licensed contractors engaged to maintain the fire safety installations for the organisation have a point of contact
- » the Fire Safety Adviser may, on behalf of the occupier, liaise with other Fire Safety Advisers in a multi-tenanted building to ensure that evacuation plans and procedures are coordinated.

Occupancies with Workplace Health and Safety Officers may choose to nominate and train those persons as the Fire Safety Adviser.

How many Fire Safety Advisers should the occupier appoint?

When considering how many Fire Safety Advisers to appoint for high occupancy buildings, assessment should be made of the workload of the Fire Safety Adviser to be effective in this role.

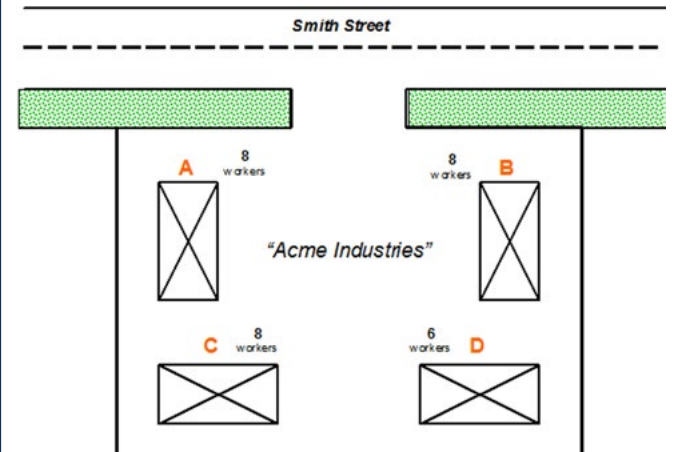
However, a Fire Safety Adviser can be appointed for more than one building. For example, a university may have one or more Fire Safety Advisers to cover its' campus, or a company which has suites of offices in one or more buildings in any city or town may appoint one or more Fire Safety Advisers to cover those buildings.

If I have a Fire Safety Adviser do I still need Building Fire Wardens?

A Fire Safety Adviser is one who has been trained in fire safety and workplace emergency response. Having a Fire Safety Adviser does not mean that building fire wardens are no longer required. A Fire Safety Adviser is not necessarily building-specific and so may not be present in the building if a fire occurs. Building Fire Wardens are building-specific.

The following examples of common building configurations will assist in determining whether a Fire Safety Adviser is required.

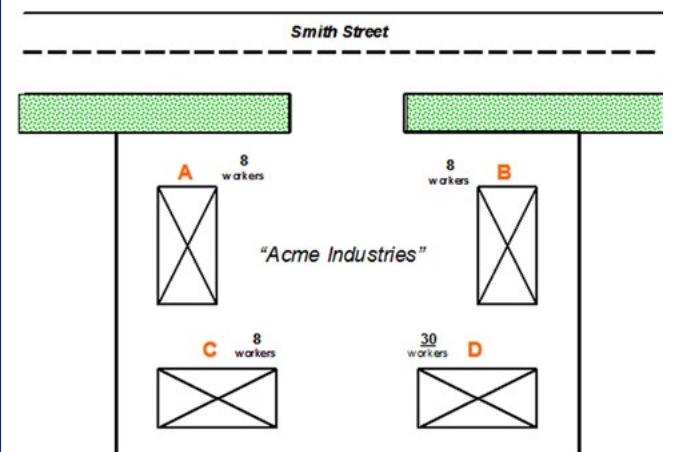
Example 1



In this example the total number of workers at Acme Industries is 30 but as there are no more than 30 workers in any one building there is no requirement to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser.

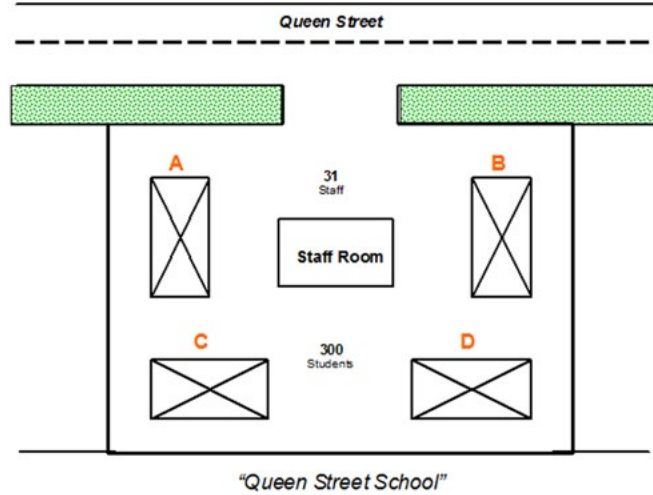
However, if there is a common building such as a canteen or meal room where workers congregate and there are more than 30 present in the building then a Fire Safety Adviser is required.

Example 2



In this example there are 30 workers in Building D. Under the current legislation a Fire Safety Adviser is required for Building D. However QFES recommends, to provide consistency, the Fire Safety Adviser would not only cover Building D but also buildings A, B and C as the site is occupied by one entity. This will achieve increased fire safety awareness across the whole site.

Example 3

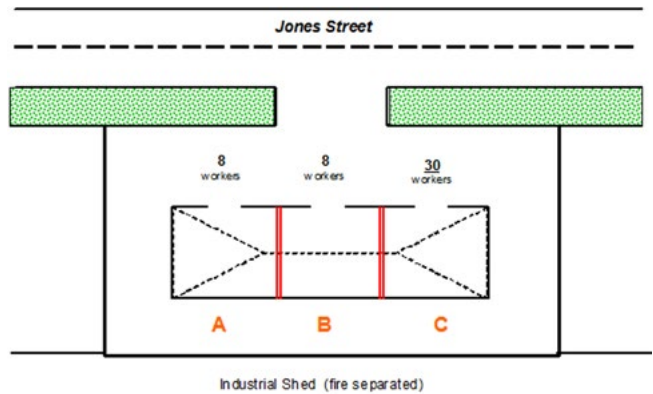


If there is a common building such as a staff room that is capable of accommodating 30 or more staff and there are 30 or more on site (as in the above example) then a Fire Safety Adviser for the staff room is required.

If no building within the school has provisions to accommodate 30 or more staff (not including students) then there is no requirement to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser.

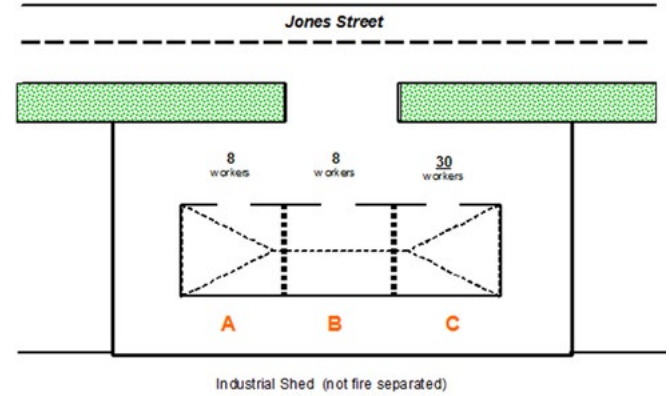
However, if a Fire Safety Adviser is required, QFES recommends that a Fire Safety Adviser be appointed for the whole site. This will achieve an increased fire safety awareness across the whole site.

Example 4



In this example there are three tenants in the same building. They are separated by fire walls. As Tenancy C has more than 30 workers a Fire Safety Adviser is required for Tenancy C.

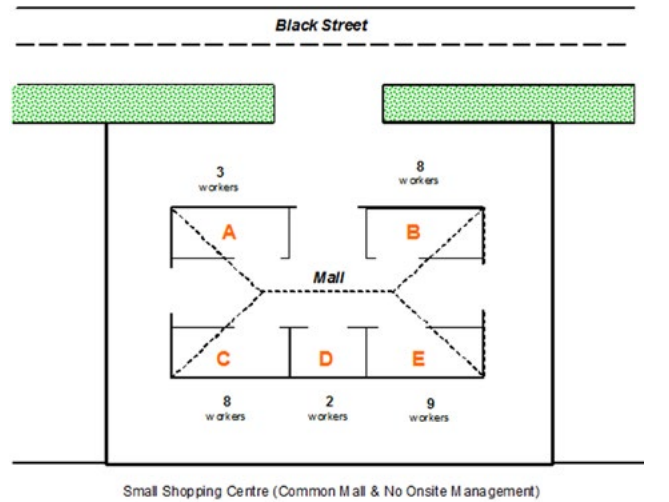
Example 5



In this example, where there is no fire separation between tenancies a Fire Safety Adviser is only required for Tenancy C.

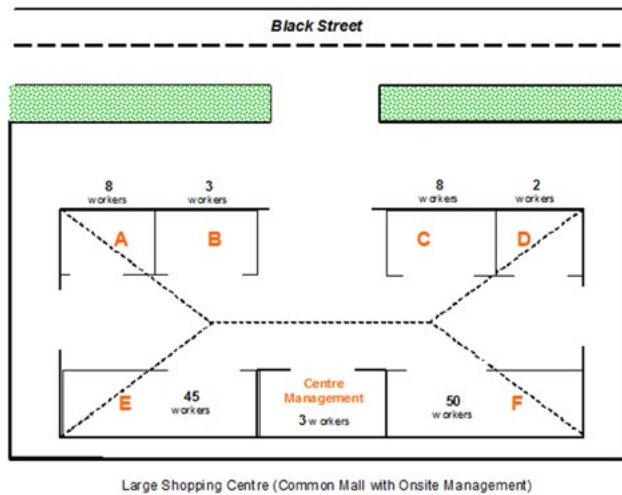
However, as the tenancies are not fire separated QFES recommends that Tenancy C approach the body corporate or Managing Entity with a view of appointing a Fire Safety Adviser for all three tenancies. This way all tenants can gain the benefit of increased fire safety awareness and the cost could be a shared arrangement.

Example 6



In this example there is no single tenancy with 30 or more employees. Therefore there is no requirement under current legislation for a Fire Safety Adviser to be appointed. However, as there are common areas, QFES recommends that the Managing Entity appoint a Fire Safety Adviser to increase the level of fire safety awareness in the building.

Example 7

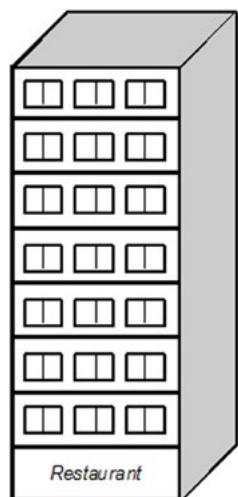


In this example, only tenancies E and F are required to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser.

However, as there are common areas, QFES recommends that the Managing Entity appoint a Fire Safety Adviser to increase the level of fire safety awareness in the building.

Tenancies E and F may still appoint their own Fire Safety Adviser or agree to share the Fire Safety Adviser appointed by centre management.

Example 8



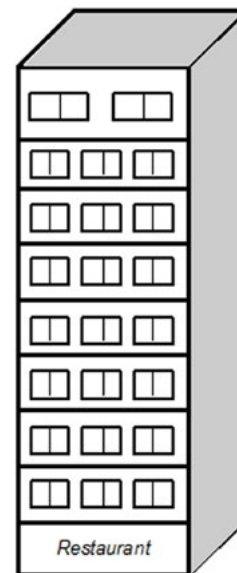
An accommodation building under 25 metres (Class 2 or 3) in effective height with a restaurant that has 31 workers.

Under current legislation the restaurant requires a Fire Safety Adviser and the accommodation building does not require one.

However, as there are common areas, QFES recommends that the Body Corporate or Managing Entity appoint a Fire Safety Adviser to increase the level of fire safety awareness in the whole building.

The restaurant may still appoint their own Fire Safety Adviser or agree to share the Fire Safety Adviser appointed by the Body Corporate or Managing Entity.

Example 9



An accommodation building over 25 metres (Class 2 or 3) in effective height with a restaurant that has 15 workers.

In this example, the Body Corporate or Managing Entity is required to appoint a Fire Safety Adviser for the building regardless of the number of workers in the building as it is over 25 metres in height.

Example 10

A high rise office building.



Business A occupies floor one and four and have 20 workers on each floor. Totalling 40 workers.

Businesses B, C, E and F each employ 29 workers per floor.

Business G occupies floor seven and eight and have 29 workers on each floor. Totalling 58 workers.

In this example, businesses A and G require a Fire Safety Adviser. Even though both businesses are spread across two levels, both levels of the business are counted as the same workplace as they are in the same building.

As there are common areas, QFES recommends that the Body Corporate or Managing Entity appoint a Fire Safety Adviser to increase the level of fire safety awareness in the whole building.

Businesses A and G may still appoint their own Fire Safety Adviser or agree to share the Fire Safety Adviser appointed by the Body Corporate or Managing Entity.

This gives a consistent fire safety approach to the whole building and not just some of the levels.

Where can I go for more information?

If you require further information, visit the QFES website at www.qfes.qld.gov.au/compliance-and-planning for a contact list of Regional Community Safety Offices, the Fire Safety Management Tool for Owner/Occupiers and the associated Advisory Notes.