

Slip Resistance Regulations

In 2014 the Australian Building Codes Board and the aligning State Government Regulators introduced changed regulations for slip resistance on stairs and ramps within the Building Code of Australia (BCA), part of the National Construction Code (NCC).

- The BCA has amended 'Deemed to Satisfy' (DtS) provisions for determining the slip-resistance to treads and nosing to stairways of **all Classes of buildings** and for pedestrian ramps and landings of Class 2 – 9 buildings. With regard to stairs this includes domestic housing.
- BCA 2014 Volume Two, Clause 3.9.1.3 (g), provides that when tested in accordance with AS4586, stair treads must have a slip-resistance finish OR a slip-resistance nosing strip. The classification is to be not less than that provided below.
 - Tread surface if expected to remain dry and not expected to have accidental spills – Classification P3 or R10.
 - Tread surface if expected to be wet or likely to become wet at times – Classification P4 or R11
 - Nosing strip if expected to remain dry and not expected to have accidental spills – Classification P3
 - Nosing strip if expected to be wet or likely to become wet at times – Classification P4

Note that the wet pendulum test has changed with the old 'X' classification being close to the new wet pendulum test 'P3' classification. The 'R' classification relates to the oil wet ramp slip-resistance test.

How the regulation may affect you

- These regulations took effect from May 1st 2014, however were deferred in WA, Vic, SA and NT to May 1st 2015 for class one buildings. For domestic purposes deferred in Qld and Tas until 1 May 2016.
- This regulation applies to all flooring products. As well as other sectors such as carpet, resilient and tiles, it covers all timber flooring products – solid timber, parquetry, cork, engineered flooring, laminate and bamboo. It equally applies to prefinished products as it does to products coated in situ.
- Slip ratings before the regulatory change did exist for commercial properties at a R9/P2 level.
- An R10 rated coating or better (the coating must be certified by a registered agency such as ATTAR or CSIRO) can be used on domestic stairs, however, it may result in a different gloss level in relationship to the same coating without the slip rating – usually more dull in appearance.
- An R11 rated coating or better (the coating must be certified by a registered agency such as ATTAR or CSIRO) must be used on external stairs or internal stairs subject to getting wet. The same issues occur in respect to sheen.

- Many coatings companies have now moved to obtain R10 or higher ratings for their coating products. To satisfy building certification procedures, you must obtain a copy of the R rating certification for that product directly from the manufacturer or from the supplier. This process means you can comply with the DtS requirements. For contractors, that means no additional costs, as the coating company has done the work for you.
- It is most likely that the stairs will subsequently have a different sheen and feel to the flat floor areas – which is a point that your customer should be advised of.
- Transparent, adhesive backed tapes (such as those sold by Safety Stride), can be purchased with an R10 rating or higher. These can be stuck to the nosing of stairs to gain compliance – again a manufacturer’s certificate is required. We recommend when using tapes that you photograph the finished job and ask the builder or consumer to sign off that it has been installed. The concern is, if the tape is pulled off later – it might be argued that the tape was never fixed if you have no proof.
- If a commercial proprietary nosing is applied, again these must be products that come with certification for DtS purposes. While these can be highly unattractive in a domestic setting, they are still possible. In a domestic property P3 rating is required. For stairs that get wet or commercial properties P4 is required.
- In situ testing is a different scenario. For raw wood stairs, coatings that do not have certification though an anti-slip additive has been added, where metal inserts or non-slip inserts have been routed into the tread (note: you may find some pre-manufactured timber nosings that have the P3 or higher rating), or other similar solutions – these scenarios require onsite testing with the pendulum test. This is likely to be an additional cost to the job. Reported costs for this are upwards of \$250 per job. There is an issue with the pendulum test, however, it must be conducted in the direction a person travels, as such the stair riser is in the way of the pendulum. The only place it will work is on the top landing (assuming that is the same surface as the treads).
- Please note, in respect of domestic dwellings, the regulation pertains to new builds and new stair installation during renovations and is subject to respective State and Territory legislation, that being part of the certification process (which does differ from State to State). Final sign off by an accredited building certifier to issue the certificate of occupancy is required to assess that the stairs are compliant to the new slip rating regulation. Some members have reported that they are installing, sanding and finishing stairs after the certificate of occupancy has been issued (home owners already moved in). Technically this means that the certifier has incorrectly completed the final certification process. In this case, if you are going in to complete work on a new home after the certificate of occupancy has been issued, while it may seem no longer necessary to comply with the regulation, we would advise erring on the side of compliance – remember ignorance is not accepted in a court of law.
- Refurbishment work on existing properties may often not require compliance with the new regulation, unless it’s combined with a renovation/extension or where State/Territory legislation requires it, as stated in the point above – for example where that extension does require building certifier approval.
- While ramps are rarely surfaced with a timber finish, where they are, the same provisions above apply.

The coating companies complying with the new regulations are changing rapidly, we recommend contacting the ATFA office for an update on the latest products that will comply. In turn we recommend coating companies keep ATFA informed of their compliance provisions.

For all of the above and to be sure of your circumstances consult with your State/Territory regulator.

Note: This information sheet has been evaluated by the Australian Building Codes Board.