Exit Signs are on the way out

The Emergency Lighting Working Group, an expert group of Lighting Council Australia, provides the following advice on recent changes to emergency lighting requirements in Australia.


The principal reason for these new editions is to specify requirements for exit signs employing the internationally accepted pictograms, instead of the previously used word EXIT.

Significant changes from the previous editions include:
- Replacement of word EXIT with a pictogram
- Inclusion of detailed restrictions on use of arrows
- Revision of viewing distances for Exit Signs
- Adoption of terminology from AS/NZS 60598:2.22
- This standard is not a joint Australia/New Zealand document; there is no content specific to New Zealand.

It is recommended that the pictogram signs be used for new buildings or refurbishments where an entire building or floor’s exit signs are being changed. This is to represent the latest and best practice which is relevant when considering OH&S and civil liability issues. However if only a limited number of signs are being changed, it may be prudent to use existing EXIT signage as it is recommended that to avoid confusion, pictogram and EXIT signage not be integrated down the same egress paths.

Two of these categories are addressed in the new AS2293 standard Emergency escape lighting and illuminated emergency exit signs.

Pictograms
The new standards allow only the following pictographs:

- Straight On From Here
- Left From Here
- Right From Here

These are from the international standard ISO3864-1.

Size of Pictorial Elements
The minimum height of the pictorial element for all illuminated exit signage is 100mm, with no limit on the maximum height. There are four recommended pictorial element heights: 100, 150, 200 and 250mm. These correspond to a maximum viewing distance.

Maximum Viewing Distance
Element Height vs Maximum Viewing Distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height (mm)</th>
<th>Viewing Distance (meters)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 150 &lt; 200</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 200 &lt; 250</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 250</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The maximum viewing distance must be marked in the green background of each diffuser. It can be within one of the elements or on any additional background.

The Australian Building Codes Board publishes the Australian Building Code each year. The ABCB recognises these new emergency lighting standards from May 2006. The new requirements apply to projects with building approval after May 2006.

Maintenance
For sites where repair or maintenance is required and pre-existing EXIT signage is installed, either the EXIT or pictogram sign may be used. Other arrangements may be considered on a project by project basis, with approval of the applicable local authority.

For more details please contact:
Executive Officer
Lighting Council Australia
GPO Box 1966 Canberra ACT 2601
Tel +61 2 6247 8011
Fax +61 2 6247 9840
email info@lightingcouncil.com
Web www.lightingcouncil.com