

Use of an Accredited Testing Laboratory

What are the proposed changes?

We are proposing to include additional instances for when an Accredited Testing Laboratory (ATL) must be used to determine if a material, assembly or product complies with certain requirements of the NCC. This is to help ensure safety for building occupants.

These changes include requiring an ATL for:

- Determining fire hazard properties, such as critical radiant flux and group number (S7C4, H3D2, Schedule 1).
- Determining combustibility (Schedule 1).
- Classifying external wall systems using AS 5113 (C1V3).

A transition period for these changes is proposed to end on adoption of NCC 2028.

Why are these changes proposed?

An ATL is an organisation that has been accredited in Australia by the [National Association of Testing Authorities Australia \(NATA\)](#) to undertake relevant tests. It can also be an organisation not based in Australia that is accredited by a body recognised by NATA through mutual recognition.

The NCC currently specifies several circumstances in which an ATL must be used to determine the conformance of a material, assembly or product with an outcome required by the NCC.

These circumstances include determining:

- A Fire Resistance Level (FRL) by the Standard Fire Test (A5G5, S1C2).
- The resistance to the incipient spread of fire by the Standard Fire Test (A5G7).
- A FRL for a method of protecting a penetration (C4D15(2)(a)(iii)).
- The time taken to reach a stipulated interface temperature for fire-protected timber (S10C4(1)).

- Compatibility of signal isolation interface units with smoke alarms for residential fire safety systems (S23C6(2)).

The proposed changes introduce 3 additional instances when ATLs must be used. These are for materials, assemblies and products that present a high risk to building occupants in the event of a fire if there is non-conformance. The use of an ATL reduces this risk.

How were the changes developed?

These changes stem from a [Proposal to Change](#) the NCC we received from an industry organisation that undertakes testing for the building industry. We refined the proposal in consultation with stakeholders.

Who's been involved?

We consulted with the [Building Codes Committee](#) and numerous stakeholders, including testing laboratories and organisations representing fire engineers, building surveyors and builders.

What are the impacts?

There is a cost impact as there will be additional instances when testing by an ATL is required. The transition period will permit time for existing products, assemblies and materials to have such tests done by an ATL if the proposed changes are implemented.

The proposed changes will increase the testing robustness and, as a result, improve product conformity assurance and enhance the safety of buildings.

Also, the NCC is currently inconsistent; sometimes requiring use of an ATL for products, materials and assemblies that present less risk than products, materials and assemblies that don't require use of an ATL. The proposed changes remove this inconsistency.

The proposed changes do not require re-testing of existing products and materials that have already been tested and confirmed by an ATL.

More information and relevant links

To read the full details of the changes, please review the NCC 2025 Volume [One](#) and [Two](#) PCD.

Want to provide feedback?

Responses to the Public Comment Draft are invited until **11:59 PM AEST Monday 1 July 2024**.

In line with the ABCB's process for undertaking public consultation, comment will only be accepted through the ABCB's online [Consultation Hub](#).

To access the Public Comment Draft and response form:

1. Download the NCC volume(s) you wish to view and provide comment. You can also download the supporting information PDF for detailed information on the more significant/complex changes.
2. Download the response form.

Once you've reviewed the draft, complete the response form, and include your feedback on the suggested changes to the NCC.

To submit your comments:

1. Enter our Public Comment Draft consultation hub.
2. Start by agreeing to the privacy statement.
3. Let us know if you'd like your submission published publicly.
4. Enter your contact details.
5. Upload your completed form in .doc format (please make sure each file is under 25MB) and submit.