

Greater regulation

Fire safety regulation has become a hot-button issue in the global construction industry.

Flammable cladding has played a significant role in recent disasters – particularly the Lacrosse and Grenfell Tower fires. This has increased the scrutiny placed on fire performance requirements of building materials used in multi-storey developments.

In Australia, governments and regulatory bodies are displaying a greater zeal in enforcing fire performance requirements. The pressure on multi-storey projects to meet onerous demands on cost, resources and time is exacerbated by a burdensome web of complex and difficult-to-understand standards, regulations and codes.

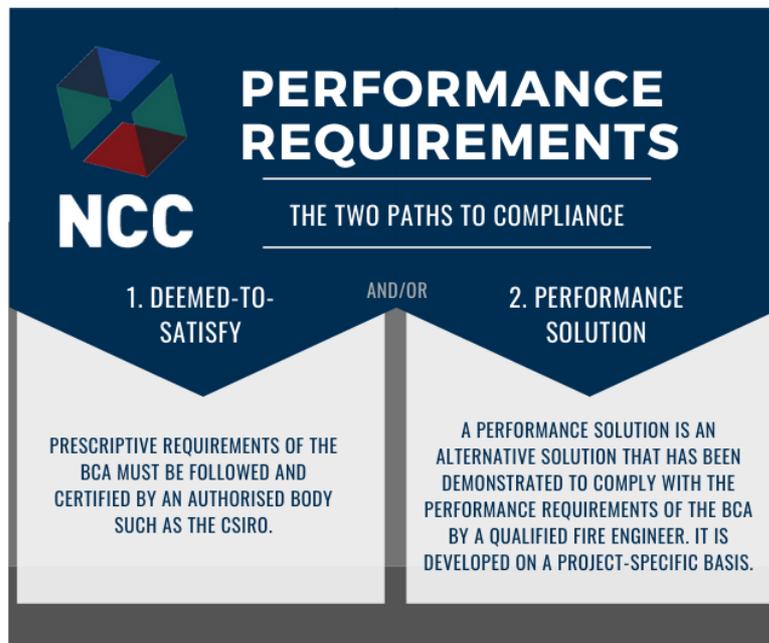
The challenge for all PVC systems: Combustibility

With the release of the new NCC:2019 (National Construction Code) new regulations have been introduced regarding combustibility of materials.

Clause C1.9(a) determines walls (external and common – and including any covering), in Type A and B buildings, must be non-combustible. The implementation of these regulations are complex and not widely understood across the industry.

The key aspect of these changes which is affecting clients of any PVC Walling System – is that PVC – like any plastic – is classified as combustible.

Further, it's not commonly understood that there are two paths to compliance:



Despite being technically classified as combustible, PVC walling systems offer greater fire protection than many alternatives as:

- PVC is a naturally fire-retardant polymer - a distinction between it and all other plastics.
- PERMAFORM PVC contains additional fire retardants, making it slow to catch or spread fire, and self-extinguishing when the source of heat or flame is removed. This has been reflected in multiple tests conducted by the CSIRO (AS1530.3/4 and AS3837)

- When PERMAFORM is exposed to high temperatures, it decomposes to provide an insulating layer of char which further retards further degradation of the PVC below. This layer of char also provides built-in fire resistance.

The BCA provides a number of concessions allowing combustible materials to be used when a Performance Solution is developed. Many PERMAFORM projects have been quickly and easily certified by providing a Performance Solution report, which is relatively fast and inexpensive.

What about CodeMark?

The building material verification program nearly collapses

Concerns about the validity of CodeMark certificates have long dogged the certification scheme, a voluntary one suppliers and manufacturers can sign up to for proof their product meets building code requirements.

In July this year, the federal government body JAS-ANZ suspended the single largest issuer of CodeMark certificates. CertMark (the Certifier of Dincel) was suspended and withdrew certificates for nine products.

In an email to the ABCB, general manager Neil Savery warned the viability of the CodeMark is in question. He warned that "[Action taken by JAS-ANZ in relation to certifying bodies] may be seen by some as further demonstration that the participating certifying bodies are not competent to practice or that the scheme is not fit for purpose."

"I do have a concern about the ongoing viability of CodeMark, however, it is important to point out that CodeMark is a voluntary scheme and has a very small number of certified products," he told The Australian Financial Review.

"In this respect the vast majority of products being used on construction sites are therefore using other forms of evidence of suitability to satisfy practitioners that they are fit for their intended purpose." Mr Savery said in a statement to The Australian Financial Review.

CodeMark was given a 60 day period to rectify the problems raised in the suspension.

[Source: Financial Review, 22 July 2019](#)

MARKET COMPARISON

	PERMAFORM QUICK > STRONG > STRAIGHT	DINCEL STRUCTURAL WALLING	afs rediwall
NCC FIRE SAFETY AMENDMENTS TO THE BCA PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS C1.10(A) (AS/NZS 3837:1998) FIRE HAZARD AND EXTINCTION PROPERTIES	DEEMED TO SATISFY GROUP 1 CERTIFIED BY CSIRO	DEEMED TO SATISFY GROUP 1 CERTIFIED BY CSIRO	DEEMED TO SATISFY GROUP 1 CERTIFIED BY CSIRO
C1.10 – CLAUSE 7 (AS/NZS 1530.3-1999) SPREAD-OF-FLAME AND SMOKE DEVELOPMENT	DEEMED TO SATISFY	DEEMED TO SATISFY	DEEMED TO SATISFY
C1.9(A) (AS1530.1) NON-COMBUSTIBILITY	PERFORMANCE SOLUTION BY ENGINEER REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE SOLUTION BY ENGINEER REQUIRED	PERFORMANCE SOLUTION FROM ENGINEER REQUIRED

The fastest path to compliance? The right certifier

As the industry is grappling with these new regulations, cracks are appearing in a key phase of the construction process: Certifiers (PCAs).

Many certifiers are under the misapprehension that a CodeMark certificate is evidence of compliance. It's not.

Other certifiers are reluctant to sign-off on projects when they are not-appropriately insured.

Permaform has partnered with an experienced, qualified and appropriately insured team of unrestricted Fire Engineers who can provide Performance Solutions and a Paths to Compliance in a time efficient and cost-effective way. Ask your account manager today.