



IN BRIEF



Diesel danger

Diesel exhaust is carcinogenic. Visible particulates make up only 4% of exhaust, while the rest are about a hundred times smaller - but a lot more deadly. "In-line exhaust filters are a solution," says Peter Marshall. "The development of this technology has been driven by the introduction of presumptive legislation overseas."



Foam alert

The UFUA OHS Committee is working to end the use of foam containing surfactants, wetting agents that improve spread and coverage. These foams are damaging to the environment and contain carcinogenic organic compounds.



News

Check out NewsTrack, the Union's roundup of links to key firefighter news, reports and comment from around the world. "I encourage members to go to <http://ufua.asn.au> and subscribe," says Peter Marshall.

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THE PRESSURE IS ON TO REDUCE AUSTRALIAN SPRINKLER STANDARDS / MATT HAYES FIRECALL.COM.AU

Code threat

The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) is planning to water down sprinkler regulations that protect firefighters

The ABCB wants to introduce a 'Life Safety Only' fire sprinkler code that would reduce structural sprinkler standards across Australia. "There implications for firefighters are severe," says UFUA National Secretary, Peter Marshall. "Any building regulation should ensure a firefighter can access a structure and retrieve a casualty safely without the building coming down on top of them, or alternatively, being engulfed by flame. The proposed code does not provide this level of protection"

There was no Union representation on the reference group that came up with these

regulatory changes, but it's not only the UFUA and Fire Services that object; the Insurance Council and National Insurance Brokers Association also view the new code proposal as fundamentally flawed.

The 'Life Only' approach means fire protection systems will only need to allow for safe egress from a building. "If the proposed code is adopted, firefighters could even refuse to enter a building unless it has a sprinkler system designed to actually control fire," says Peter Marshall.

The BCA will accept public comment on its proposed changes until March 6, 2009.

BUSHFIRE HAZARD WARNING

Beware of asbestos! That's the message to firefighters and others moving about Victoria's bushfire burn sites. "Any house built before 1990 is likely to contain asbestos in some form," says Tim Tolhurst from the Asbestos Diseases Society of Victoria (ADSVIC). Anybody working in the vicinity of a burn site needs to wear a respirator and gloves. UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall says, "Over

3,000 uses of asbestos have been identified and in the US it's estimated that 80% of all buildings constructed before 1978 contain asbestos. The same is likely here, so asbestos remains a serious hazard." The UFUA Victoria Branch has issued an asbestos hazard warning to Members working in the bushfire zones and has approached the employer to issue a safety alert.