Part B
Guidelines

Section 5

Public building approvals

Guideline 9: Public building approvals

Definition: Public building

The *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* defines any place of assembly as a public building and specifies the approval authority as local government. It also requires local government to issue a certificate of approval. The Act provides the head of power to enable the approving authority – local government – to ensure that all health and safety related issues in and about the event are addressed, sets capacity and can close events and prevent ticket sales.

A public building approval is unique in that it is the only approval that applies to almost every event.

Separate approvals may be required for defined areas, spectator stands or marquees.

A public building approval is more commonly known as an 'event application'.

Background

- Public building approval from the local government is needed before an event can proceed. Contact your local government for the necessary forms.
- The public building approval process has 3 parts: the application, the approval to construct or erect and the final certificate of approval.
- A public building (or event) will only be approved once all health and safety issues have been satisfactorily addressed. Then the final approval will be issued.
- It is an offence to operate without a valid certificate of approval and both local government and police are authorised to close public buildings that are considered unsafe or unsuitable.
- The **type of use** is a critical element in the approval process. If you are holding your event in an existing building, it may already have a certificate of approval for its normal type of use. If so, an application for a variation of a certificate of approval may need to be made to allow your event to go ahead at the venue.
- Applications should include the *Health (Public Buildings) Regulations 1992* – Application to construct, extend or alter a public building page 147.

How to apply for a public building approval

Event managers must allow enough time for Council to consider the application prior to organising the event. A typical application process time is as follows:

- Low risk events are usually able to be approved at officer level under delegated authority. It is advisable to submit applications **at least 6 weeks** prior to the event.
- High risk events quite often require the approval of council (i.e. it may need to be tabled at the next local council meeting). It is therefore advisable that applications for high risk events are submitted at **least 3 months** prior to the event.

It is important that you speak with your local government prior to submitting an event application as local governments may have a unique application process and form. A generic event application form can be found in the Forms Section. Typical Event Application Form.

Event applications should contain the following information:

- a description of the event
- a letter of consent from the landowner (or owner's agent) stating that the owner has approved the use of the property
- event manager's previous experience in similar events
- a plan of the venue which depicts locations of proposed stages, lighting towers, temporary structures, sanitary facilities, exits and entry points and other features or attractions
- prior to council considering any application for an event written comments should be obtained from the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the relevant police station. These comments should be submitted to council with the application for approval
- parking arrangements should be made with council's ranger services and a parking layout submitted with the application. Event managers should encourage use of public transport if available. Parking control measures need to be provided
- separate applications will be required for food vendors, noise applications, and liquor licences
- event managers must make separate application if road or street closures are required.

Provide enough information to allow approving officers to understand critical safety issues that may be associated with the structures.

Approval to construct or erect

Local government assess and will either reject or approve the application. Conditional approvals can also be granted.

Final approval

- When the structures are completed, local governments need to be advised so that the appropriate personnel can inspect and issue an approval to allow the facility to be used.
- A Health (Public Buildings) Regulations 1992, Form 2, Application for a certificate of approval is used for this purpose, this can be found in the forms section Form 2.

Application for variation of a certificate of approval

- In circumstances where there is an existing certificate of approval in place, and there is a request for an increased capacity or a change of use for which the building has not been approved then an application for a variation of a certificate of approval will be required.
- When the venue or temporary structure has been constructed and is ready for the event to commence, a Form 2 – Application for a Certificate of Approval should be lodged with the local government. This signifies that all approval requirements have been completed and that the construction and load in phases are complete.
- If structural alterations are required a Building Licence will be necessary. If there are no structural alterations, then an application may be submitted on a Public Buildings Form 3 – Application for variation of a certificate of approval.

Note: Other public building approval criteria are listed in Guideline 10: public building design requirements.

Example

Sports centres with large floor areas are often approved only for sporting purposes, however their large floor areas may be attractive for event managers looking to hold concerts or even markets. They may be unsuitable for larger events because toilet facilities and exits are inadequate. The capacity can usually be increased for one-off events with minor alterations and by providing additional temporary toilet facilities.

Forms

- Form 1: Application to Construct, Extend or Vary a Public Building.
- Form 2: Application for a Certificate of Approval- Health (Public Buildings) Regulations 1992.
- Form 3: Application for Variation of a Certificate of Approval.
- Event Application Form.

Guideline 10: Public building design

The following information provides guidance on some of the design requirements that need to be addressed. These requirements apply to both permanent and temporary public buildings.

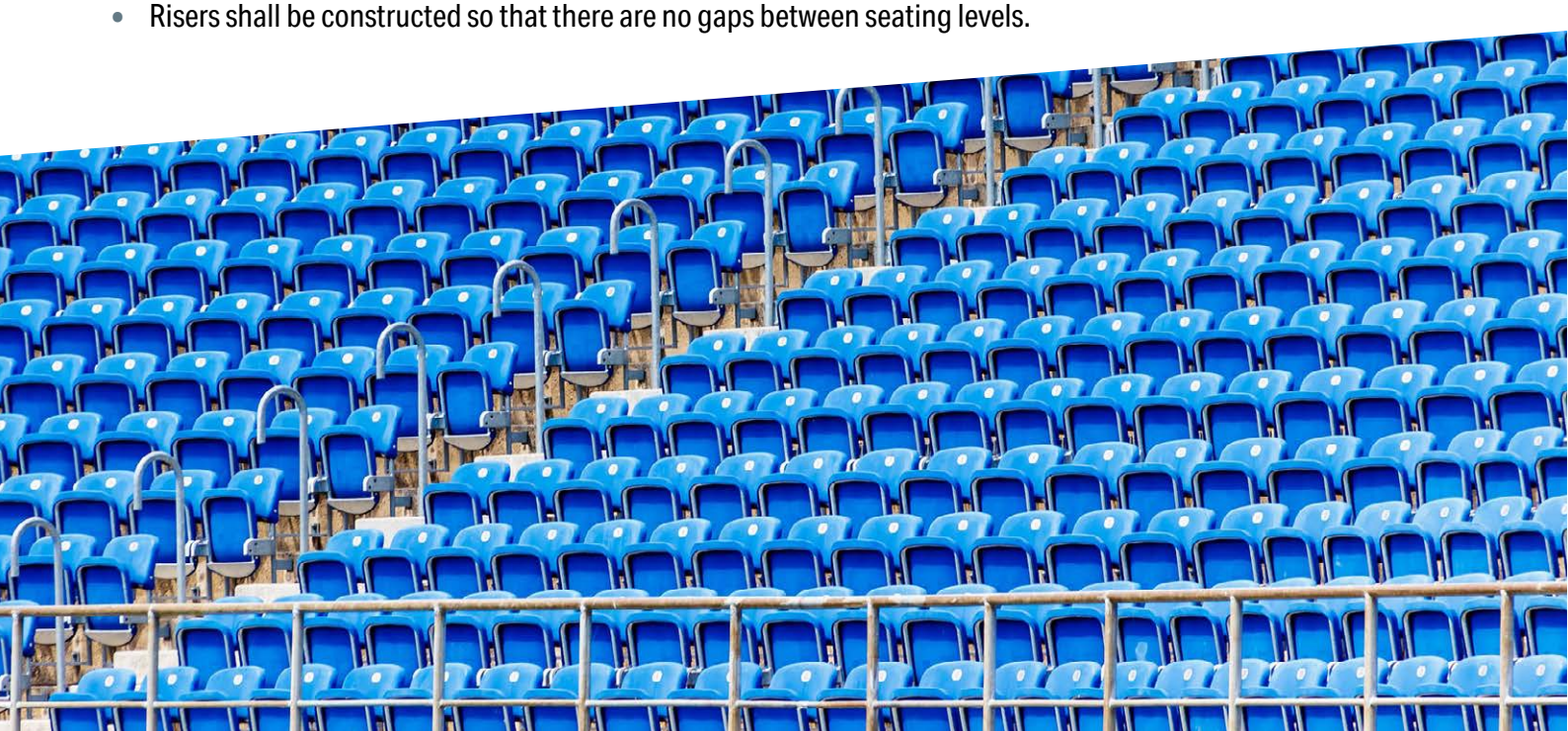
Seating Specifications

- The clearance between rows of seats shall be:
  - 300 mm if the distance to an aisle is less than 3.5 metres, that is 8 seats
    Or
  - 500 mm if the distance to an aisle is more than 3.5 metres.
- Aisles are required on both side of every row of seats that is more than 10 seats.
- There shall be no more than 42 seats between aisles.
- The sides and rear of raised seating areas must be bounded by guard rails.
- Guardrails must be securely fixed. Guardrails that are loose and wobble are not acceptable.
- Loose seats on flat ground must be secured in groups of no less than 4. Seats forming rows on tiered stands must be secured to the floor.
- For bench seating at least 450 mm must be allowed for each person. Each space shall be clearly identified.

Guardrails must extend 1000 mm above any surface where a person can stand and must not have any spaces that will allow a 150 mm diameter sphere to pass through any section. If there is more than a 4-metre drop, then there must be no hand holds. Rails and balustrades that comply with the BCA's "deemed to satisfy" provisions will be deemed compliant.

Stairs, steps and risers

- The risers of aisle steps shall be no less than 115 mm and no more than 190 mm and the tread (or going) shall be no less than 280 mm.
- Other stair and step risers shall not exceed 170 mm and the going shall be no less than 280 mm. They shall be uniform.
- Risers shall be constructed so that there are no gaps between seating levels.



Exits

- There must be more than 1 exit if more than 50 people are to be accommodated.
- There must be no more than 20 metres of travel to any exit or to a point. Where there is access to 2 exits, the furthest shall be no more than 40 metres from the starting point.
- Exits shall open in the direction of egress and be able to be operated with a single hand action.
- Side walls through tents may be used as exits if they utilise hook and loop (Velcro) type fastenings.
- Traditional ties can be used for security purposes whilst the public is not in attendance.
- Manual sliding doors cannot be used as exits for places with more than 50 people.

Exit signs

- Each required exit shall be identified by an electrically operated sign that complies with AS/NZS 2293.
- Whenever possible these signs should be connected to a 'Town' supply and not a generator.

Exit width

- For buildings the aggregate width of exits should comply with the BCA Section D1.6. For outdoor areas refer to 'Entries and Exits' in the support tools (p. 135)

Further information

Guideline 21 Entry and Exits on page 67.

Guideline 11: Temporary structures (marquees, tents, spectator stands)

Background

In Western Australia, every time a tent, marquee or spectator stand is erected it requires local government approval either as a public building under the Health Act or as a temporary building under the Building Regulations.

- Local government may waive this requirement for small, low risk structures.
- As a rule, if the public are within or on the facility it should have local government approval.

Guidelines

When a temporary structure is to be a public building, or it is part of a larger event the following information should be provided as part of the public building application package.

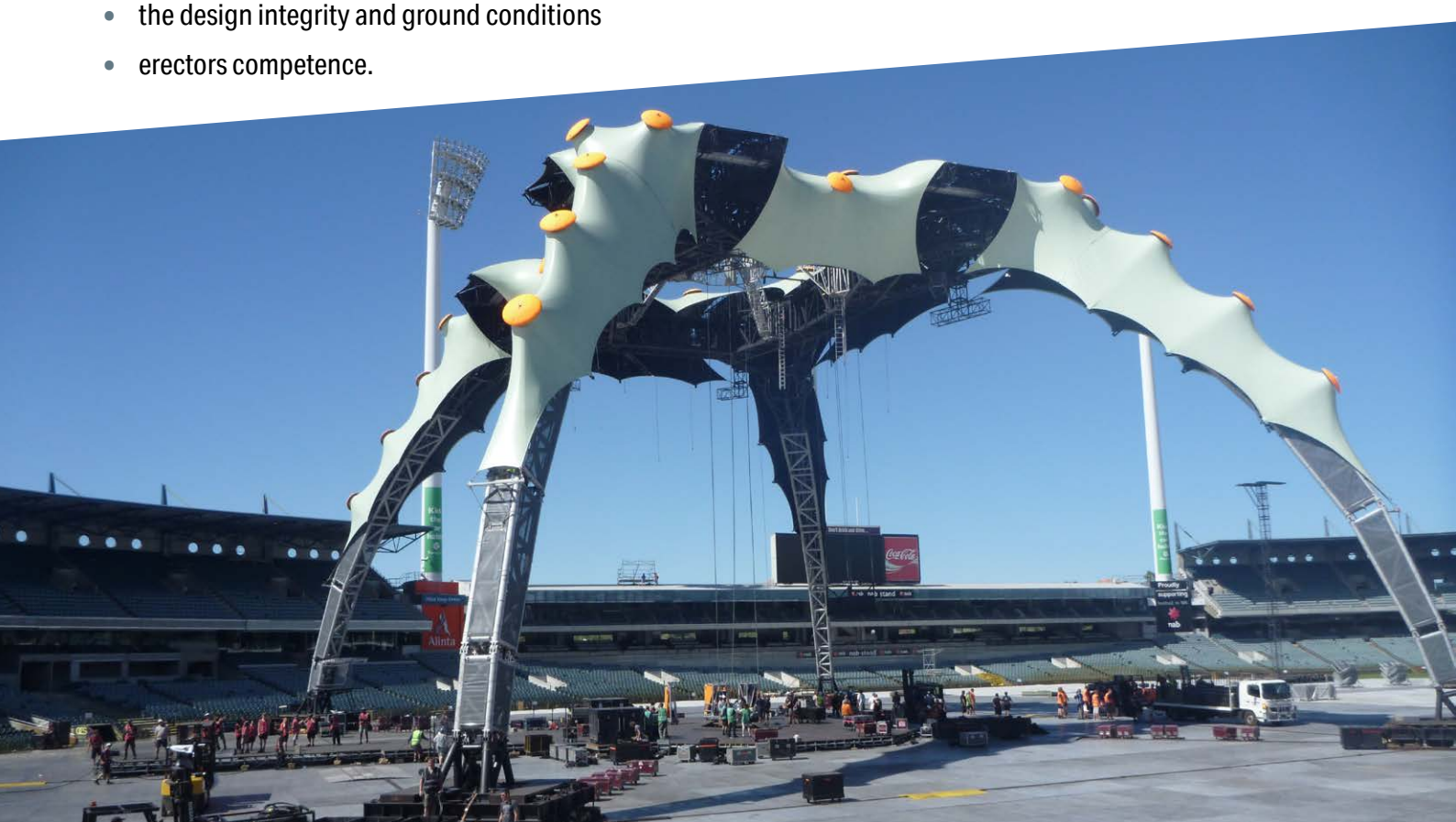
Information required in application includes:

1. General Information
2. Manufacturers Information
3. Structural Adequacy
4. Fire Indices
5. Design Parameters

General information

This includes:

- the purpose for which it will be used
- the number of people expected to use the facility
- the design integrity and ground conditions
- erectors competence.



Manufacturers information

The following design and construction details are required:

- manufacturer name and contact details
- description of the structure
  - dimensions
  - type of material and intended uses
- codes or standards to which it complies
- structural adequacy
- fabric fire indices
- design parameters
  - wind limitations,
  - ground density
  - footing loads or ballast requirements.
- instruction booklet with drawings, bracing diagrams and a checklist
- correct erection methods
- training necessary to correctly erect the structure.

Structural adequacy

- For structures greater than 55m^2 manufacturer structural design certification and calculations should be enough to address the structural adequacy requirement. However, if these are not available, then a history of use should suffice. In some instances, however, certification by a practicing structural engineer may also be required.
- Included in the support tools section is a Typical Checklist for a Temporary Structure / Marquee (see page 126).

Design parameters

Fire indices

- Details of the flammability of materials used to construct and decorate the facility must be provided. Whenever possible, test results from a NATA approved laboratory should be provided. The test certificates must have sufficient information to enable them to be identified with the particular material being assessed. Materials must not develop molten flaming droplets.

Wind loading

- Wind loading is critical. Design information must identify maximum safe wind speeds that structures can withstand. Event managers must understand these parameters and include them in risk and operational planning documents. Refer to the support tools section for speed and force conversion tables.

Ground density

- The ground density is perhaps the most important criteria as it is the area most likely to cause structures to fail.
- The ground holding requirements must be ascertained. As a guide to the holding requirements of various soil types the following figures are appropriate.
- The soil type anticipated holding capacity and any criteria that may affect that capacity should be noted on the check list and erection certification.

Loose sand	35 kpa
Clay	80 kpa
Moderately compacted sand and/or gravel	180 kpa

Ballast

- Where structures rely on ballast the ground density is of lesser importance, but the required weights and footing details must be clearly identified. Ballast is preferred over ground anchors as the soil and ground holding becomes irrelevant.

Construction manual

- Manufacturers should provide documented information on erection procedures, bracing diagrams and a checklist to ensure that all the critical criteria have been complied with. This documentation should outline competencies required to enable the facility to be erected safely.

Support tools

- Speed Conversions.
- Temporary Structures – typical checklist.
- Australian Building Code Board's Temporary Structures Standard.
- Information on Construction Safety Awareness Training.

Guideline 12: Spectator stands

Background

There are no specific regulatory requirements or Australian Standards for spectator stands.

- The Australian Building Codes Board published Standards for Temporary Structures in 2015 but the application of the Standard is not yet mandatory or uniform throughout Australia. ABCB Temporary Structures Standard.

Guidelines

- When spectator stands are not subject to a building licence, the stands must be approved in accordance with S. 176 of the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911*. This authorises local government to make any reasonable request that may ensure that facilities will be safe.

Structural

- Certification from a practising structural engineer should be provided to certify that the structure is suitable for the proposed use. It should be constructed in accordance with industry standards and methods.

Footings

- Most temporary structures do not have deep footings and merely sit on the ground. These must be solid blocks preferably hardwood or treated so that they will not split.

Example:

Unless otherwise authorised by a practising structural engineer, temporary structures should bear on a substantial hardwood base – recommended size 300 mm x 200 mm by 40 mm thick. Smaller or soft wood types or bricks are not acceptable.

Guideline 13: Shows, carnivals and fairs

Background

This guideline applies to show concessions and is based upon the Royal Agricultural Society's former guidelines for exhibitors.

AS/NZS 3002 Electrical Installations – Shows and Carnivals defines a concession as:

'Any booth, display, riding device or any other single entertainment unit'

Concessions are often small tent-like structures. Although they are generally considered low risk, they can present an extreme risk in high winds if not anchored adequately. There are recorded incidents where small tents have become airborne and flown into show rides with catastrophic results.

Significant fire loads may develop for groups of concessions, especially as many may have flammable goods.

Guidelines

- Facilities should be completed at least 24 hours before the show commences.
- Prior to commencing construction, a *Health (Public Buildings) Regulations 1992*, Form 1 application should be submitted to the local government.
    - Note: local government may not require a Form 1 application for small tents, small marquees, rides, or small show bag concessions or the like and may instead rely on previous history of long-established use.
- For low risk situations local government may allow competent event managers to administer construction standards for temporary low risk structures but audit this process prior to events.
- Event managers should have a register to record:
    - all facility locations
    - a description of the type and use of the facility
    - erectors' certificates of compliance
    - structural certificates.
- The role of the local government should be to formally approve all permanent structures, seating stands and buildings which members of the public will either be on or inside of. Part of the role of the local government is to audit the event managers records and to be satisfied that smaller temporary structures are compliant.

Amusement structures

- Show amusement rides, including bouncy castles, must comply with Subdivision 2 of the *Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022*.
- The basic requirement for amusement structures is compliance with AS 3533 Amusement rides and devices – Design and construction.

Concession booths

- Components must be bolted or locked in place, slip joints are not acceptable.
- Booths must be able to be fully enclosed and waterproof.
- Operators must supply a certificate to verify that the structure has been installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and instructions.
- This certificate must include details of the fabric flammability.
- Where new concessions are purchased or manufactured, certified flammability tests from a NATA laboratory should be obtained to verify the fabric flammability. Where this is not available a flammability test may be required.

Additional information

- Local government may require additional information information and can order structures that are considered unsafe or unsuitable to be demolished.
- Where footings are used, they must be solid hardwood or solid masonry blocks.
- Except for the limited use of polystyrene in small signs, concessions must not be constructed from thin plywood, masonite, polystyrene or other similar materials.
- Facilities must not obstruct access to any fire hose, fire hydrant or fixed fire extinguisher on or near their sites. Facilities must be set out, so that fire hose reels may be fully extended.
- Any part of any tent, including guy ropes and supports, or awning erected on their site must not protrude over the boundaries of their site or beyond a kerb line or demarcated road edge where no kerbing exists.

Guideline 14: Motor sports

Guidelines

Motor sports are inherently dangerous, and the *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* defines those that have spectator viewing as public buildings.

A very broad concept is that spectators must be protected from competition vehicles and debris from the race area. The types of barriers will vary between the different sports.

There are 4 critical safety elements to be considered:

- spectator safety
- competitor safety
- officials' safety
- vehicle safety.

Whilst these guidelines primarily focus on spectator safety the other aspects cannot be ignored as they may ultimately affect spectators if ignored or poorly administered.

It is recommended that motor sports are administered by an appropriate authority that can address all the safety issues.

In Western Australia the following organisations are recognised as appropriate authorities:

- Motor Racing – Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS)
- Speedway – WA Speedway Commission (Speedway West)
- Motorcycling – Motorcycling Western Australia (MWA)
- Speed Boating – Australian Power Boat Association (APBA)
- Go Karts – Australian Karting Association (AKA)
- Drag Racing – Australian National Drag Racing Association (ANDRA).

References

Health (Public Buildings) Regulations 1992, Government of Western Australia.