

Fee Advice for Building Development Application Referrals



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Glossary of Acronyms

AIR	<i>Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022</i>
BDA	Building Development Application
BF	Base Fee
BDFR	<i>Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008</i>
DTS	Deemed to Satisfy
FEB	Fire Engineering Brief
FEBCF	Fire Engineering Brief Consultation Fee
FER	Fire Engineering Report

FESA	<i>Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990</i>
NCC	National Construction Code
PA	<i>Planning Act 2016</i>
PR	<i>Planning Regulation 2017</i>
PS	Performance Solutions
QFES	Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
RF	Research Fee
SFS	Special Fire Services
TSFSF	Total Special Fire Service Fees

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1. Introduction

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) has the legislated authority, as well as the knowledge and experience, to ensure the safety of the community from the effects of fire and emergencies in buildings in Queensland. The *Planning Act 2016* (PA) requires that, where applicable, under the *Planning Regulation 2017* (PR) applicants must refer building development applications (BDA) to QFES to provide advice to the assessment manager.




The referral process includes, but is not limited to, meetings prior to, or after, submitting the referral to QFES, assessment of drawings and fire engineering reports, inspection of building work and providing reports. Applications for change of class or use, marinas, temporary structures and special structures may also be required to be referred to QFES.

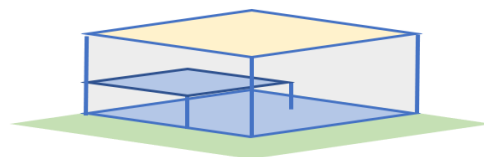
The fees required to be paid by the applicant for the BDA are specified in the *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* (BFSR). Fees for other services are legislated under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1990* (FESA).

2. Base Fee

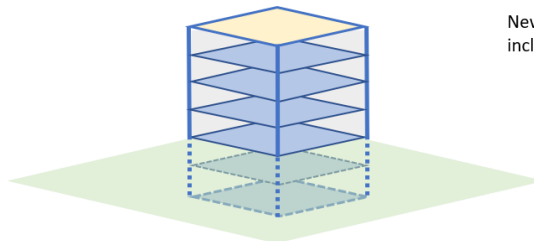
The base fee (BF), as specified in the BFSR, is determined by the floor area of the stated building work that is referred to QFES. It includes new constructions, extensions to existing buildings and renovations and fit-outs to existing buildings. Below ground level floor area such as underground car parking is included. Fit-outs are calculated on floor area involved.

Below are simple examples of floor area.

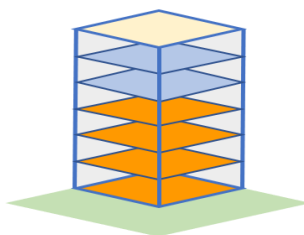
	New floor area, charged
	Existing floor area, not charged (see Section 9 regarding fit-outs)
	Roof area, not charged



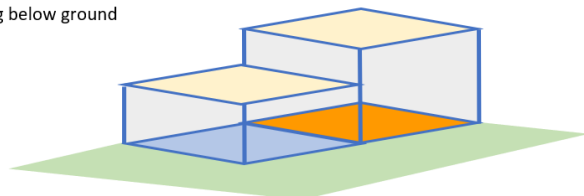
New warehouse. A mezzanine is included in floor area.



New multi-storey accommodation or office building etc. Floor area is the sum of the floor area of each level, including below ground levels.



Extension to an existing multi-storey building. Floor area is calculated on the sum of the floor area of the new floors.



Existing building. The chargeable floor area is the floor area of the extension.

BFSR, Schedule 2, Part 1 itemises the fee units applicable to each threshold of floor area of the stated building work. This is the BF from which the rest of the assessment and inspection fee is derived.

3. Special Fire Services

Special Fire Services (SFS) are fire safety installations required in buildings by the National Construction Code (NCC) dependent upon the classification, intended usage, size, location, etc. SFS are outlined in the PR.

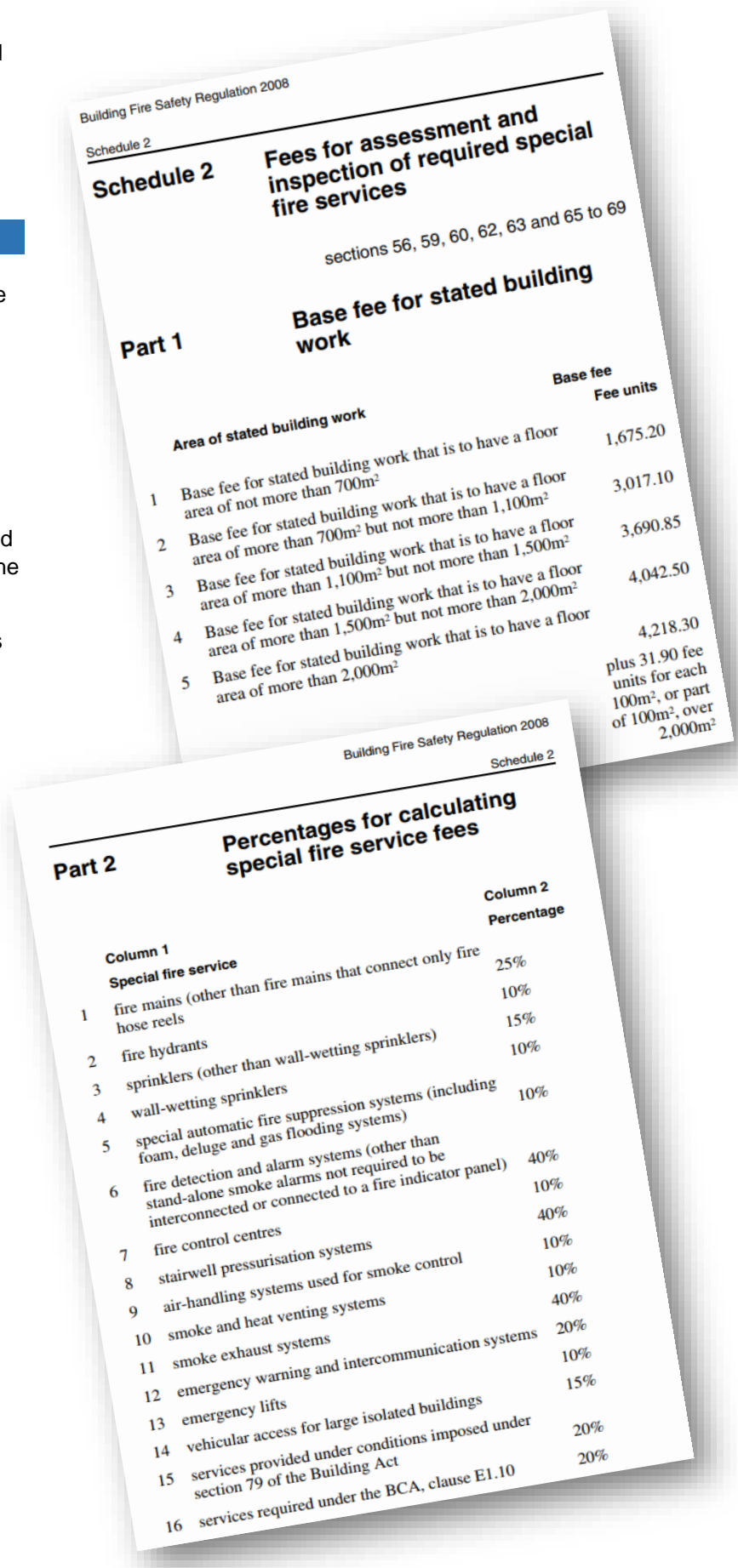
The assessment manager will determine the SFS that are required by the NCC in the building that is the subject of the BDA.

BFSR, Schedule 2, Part 2 provides a weighting to each required SFS in the form of a percentage of the BF determined from the floor area of the building work. This reflects QFES time, resources and expertise determined to assess plans and inspect the building when the SFS have been installed in the building under construction.

Note: From 1 July 2022 regulated fees are listed as fee units, not dollar amounts. The *Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022 (AIR)* mandates the value of a fee unit. The number of fee units listed in the BFSR is multiplied by the fee unit value listed in the AIR to obtain the dollar value of the fee.

The QFES fee calculator will be maintained to show dollar values current at time of use.

[See Section 15 for fee unit value](#)



4. Deemed to Satisfy Assessment and Inspection Fee


The most common BDA referral to QFES involves proposals where the design meets the performance requirements of the NCC through a Deemed to Satisfy (DTS) approach using predetermined methods of achieving fire safety in a building.

The BFSR requires the applicant to pay the BF and the sum total of the special fire service fees (TSFSF) for QFES to assess and provide one inspection for a DTS referral to QFES (i.e. BF+TSFSF).

QFES provides an online fee calculator at <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/planning-and-compliance/referral-agency-advice> to assist applicants for BDA referrals to QFES to calculate the fees applicable to their referral.

Where an applicant submits a referral to QFES prior to engaging a certifier the fees are calculated in the same manner as a standard BDA referral.

As an example, if an applicant submits a referral to QFES for a new building with a proposed floor area of 1000m² that requires fire hydrants, a sprinkler system and a fire detection and alarm system this would incur the fee shown here.



Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Building Development Approval Referral Fee Calculator

Note: For the purposes of this fee calculator the terms Performance Solution and Alternative Solution are interchangeable.

Deemed-To-Satisfy or Performance Solution (PS) DTS Fee Year 2023 (1 July)

Base Fee		\$ Amount
Not more than 700m ²	\$1,775.70	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
700m ² – 1100m ²	\$3,198.10	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$ 3,198.10
1100m ² – 1500m ²	\$3,912.30	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
1500m ² – 2000m ²	\$4,285.05	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
More than 2000m ²	\$4,471.95 + \$33.80 for each 100m ² or part of 100m ² over 2000m ²	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
BASE FEE TOTAL		\$ 3,198.10

Special Fire Service Fee	% of Base Fee	\$ Amount
Fire Mains (booster and/or pump)	25%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Fire Hydrants (spring or pillar hydrants)	10%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$ 319.81
Sprinklers	15%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$ 479.72
Wall-wetting sprinklers	10%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Special automatic fire suppression systems	10%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Fire detection & alarm system	40%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> \$ 1,279.24
Fire control centres or rooms	10%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Stairwell pressurisation systems	40%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Air-handling systems used for smoke control	10%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Smoke and heat venting systems	10%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Smoke exhaust systems	40%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Emergency Warning and Intercom Systems	20%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Emergency lifts	10%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Vehicular access for Large Isolated Buildings	15%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Services provided under conditions imposed under sect 79 of the Building Act	20%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
Services required under the BCA, clause E1.10	20%	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ -
SPECIAL FIRE SERVICE FEE TOTAL		\$ 2,078.77

PERFORMANCE SOLUTION FEES		\$ Amount
1. Assessment Fee	2 x (Base Fee + Special Fire Service Fee)	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
2. Research Fee for 1 Subsystem	\$1,738.70	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
3. Research Fee for 2 - 5 Subsystems	\$2,856.45	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
4. Research Fee for more than 5 Subsystems	\$5,713.65	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
5. Fire Engineering Brief Consultation Fee	\$5,465.10	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
PERFORMANCE SOLUTION FEE TOTAL		N/A

Reassessment	\$682.85	per hour or part thereof	hrs	\$ -
Reinspection	\$1,365.95	first 1 hour or part of 1 hour, plus \$682.85 for each additional hour, or part of an hour.	hrs	\$ -

TOTAL ESTIMATED FEES \$ 5,276.87

Note: The accuracy of the calculator is dependent upon the information entered. Anyone using the calculator should confirm all relevant information with the assessment manager (certifier).

BF determined by floor area

SFS fees calculated as a percentage of BF

TSFSF

Total = BF + TSFSF

5. Performance Solution Assessment and Inspection Fee

Increasingly, proposed building designs referred to QFES do not meet the DTS performance requirements of the NCC. In these instances, a performance solution (previously referred to as an alternative solution in the NCC) will be utilised. Performance solutions (PS) are engineered solutions that must be developed by a licensed professional. Generally, fire engineers produce fire engineering briefs (FEB) and the applicant has access to three meetings with QFES to discuss the proposals. These meetings, whether the applicant utilises them or not, are incorporated into the fee structure as a mandatory fee. The FEB is then developed into a fire engineering report (FER) which is submitted to QFES for assessment. Where a request is made for QFES to provide comment on an FEB prior to formal submission the fee is charged at an hourly rate.

[See Section 15 for fees.](#)

As every PS is individual to each building proposal, the BFSR requires the applicant to pay additional fees to provide for research into the engineering that has been proposed. Consideration must be given to the holistic outcomes for each building proposal with regards to safety for occupants of the building and the safe working environment for firefighters and emergency workers in the event of a fire or other emergency.

The fee for a PS assessment and one inspection includes a research fee (the amount is dependent upon the number of subsystems affected by the PS) and a fire engineering brief consultation fee (FEBCF) and is calculated using the following formula:


$$2 \times (\text{BF} + \text{TSFSF}) + \text{RF} + \text{FEBCF}$$

As an example, if an applicant submits a referral to QFES for a new building with a proposed floor area of 1000m² that requires fire hydrants, a sprinkler system, a fire detection and alarm system and a PS that involves two subsystems this would incur the fee shown here.

DTS fee is doubled as shown in line 1.

The research fee is dependent upon the number of subsystems affected by the PS. One option must be selected.

The FEB consultation fee is mandatory



Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Building Development Approval Referral Fee Calculator

Note: For the purposes of this fee calculator the terms Performance Solution and Alternative Solution are interchangeable.

Deemed-To-Satisfy or Performance Solution (PS) AS Fee Year 2023 (1 July)

Base Fee		\$ Amount
Not more than 700m ²	\$1,775.70	\$ -
700m ² – 1100m ²	\$3,198.10	\$ 3,198.10
1100m ² – 1500m ²	\$3,912.30	\$ -
1500m ² – 2000m ²	\$4,285.05	\$ -
More than 2000m ²	\$4,471.35 + \$33.80 for each 100m ² or part of 100m ² over 2000m ²	\$ -
BASE FEE TOTAL		\$ 3,198.10

Special Fire Service Fee		% of Base Fee	\$ Amount
Fire Mains (booster and/or pump)		25%	\$ -
Fire Hydrants (spring or pillar hydrants)		10%	\$ 319.81
Sprinklers		15%	\$ 479.72
Wall-wetting sprinklers		10%	\$ -
Special automatic fire suppression systems		10%	\$ -
Fire detection & alarm system		40%	\$ 1,279.24
Fire control centres or rooms		10%	\$ -
Stairwell pressurisation systems		40%	\$ -
Air-handling systems used for smoke control		10%	\$ -
Smoke and heat venting systems		10%	\$ -
Smoke exhaust systems		40%	\$ -
Emergency Warning and Intercom Systems		20%	\$ -
Emergency lifts		10%	\$ -
Vehicular access for Large Isolated Buildings		15%	\$ -
Services provided under conditions imposed under sect 79 of the Building Act		20%	\$ -
Services required under the BCA, clause E1.10		20%	\$ -
SPECIAL FIRE SERVICE FEE TOTAL			\$ 2,078.77

PERFORMANCE SOLUTION FEES			\$ Amount
1. Assessment Fee	2 x (Base Fee + Special Fire Service Fee)		\$ 10,553.73
2. Research Fee for 1 Subsystem	One 'Research Fee'	\$1,738.70	\$ -
3. Research Fee for 2 - 5 Subsystems	is required by	\$2,856.45	\$ 2,856.45
4. Research Fee for more than 5 Subsystems	BFSR Sect (62)(b)	\$5,713.65	\$ -
5. Fire Engineering Brief Consultation Fee	Required by BFSR Sect (62)(c)	\$5,465.10	\$ 5,465.10
PERFORMANCE SOLUTION FEE TOTAL			\$ 18,875.28

Reassessment	\$682.85	per hour or part thereof	hrs	\$ -
Reinspection	\$1,365.35	first 1 hour or part of 1 hour, plus \$682.85 for each additional hour, or part of an hour.	hrs	\$ -
TOTAL ESTIMATED FEES				\$ 18,875.28

6. Reassessment Fee

Occasionally, after a referral has been assessed by QFES, the building design is altered and the revised proposal is referred to QFES. This requires QFES to reassess the referral but does not affect the inspection process. The fee for reassessment is calculated at an hourly rate and is not dependent upon the floor area of the building work.

[See section 15 for fees.](#)

Where the reassessment submitted to QFES requires a change from DTS to PS, or from PS to DTS, QFES will refund, to the applicant, 50% of the previous assessment fee. The applicant will then be required to pay the full assessment fee for the amended referral. Where the change is from PS to DTS the 50% refund does not include the research fee or the FEB consultation fee.

7. Multiple Building Application Assessment and Inspection Fee

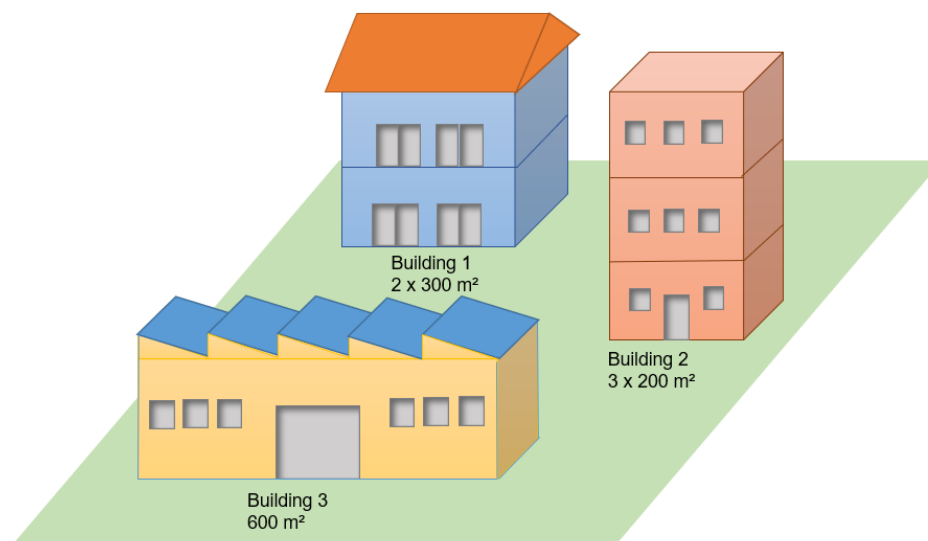
Where a BDA referral to QFES is for multiple building works on one site and the referral meets certain criteria, QFES will assess and inspect each building separately but combine the total of the floor area for all buildings for billing purposes and only one invoice will be processed.

A multiple building application (MBA) referral must meet all of the following:

- be submitted to QFES on the same day,
- be for the same site,
- have the same Development Approval for Building Work number,
- have the same applicant,
- be for the same type of building work e.g. all building work, or all fit-outs etc.

Where one of the buildings utilises a PS all of the referrals that form part of the MBA referral will incur fees at the PS rate.

An MBA referral provides cost savings for the applicant where individual buildings fall between size thresholds. As an example, where a referral to QFES proposes three 600m² buildings, with SFSs, on one site, the BF would be calculated on three $\times \leq 700\text{m}^2$ floor areas if each building were submitted individually. Where a referral to QFES meets the requirements of an MBA referral the fee would be calculated on one $\times 1800\text{m}^2$ floor area. This also reduces the percentages of SFS fees.



8. Additional Inspection Fees

The BFSR allows for one inspection as part of the assessment and inspection fee for a QFES referral. For various reasons QFES may be requested to conduct an additional inspection.

The following inspection types are charged at an hourly rate:

- a reinspection where QFES has conducted an inspection and issued a report identifying the building works do not comply with the building approval,
- where a certifier determines that a stage of building works is ready to be occupied and all SFSs are installed and ready to be inspected,
- the applicant requests an additional inspection,
- for an interim inspection.

[See section 15 for fees.](#)

9. Fit-out Fees

Existing commercial premises often undergo modifications due to change of occupier, etc. This does not always involve extensive building work but may affect installed SFS, therefore must be certified and referred to QFES. Where a referral to QFES for assessment and inspection involves:

- a fit-out that may affect existing SFS but does not involve modifying the SFS, the applicant is required to pay the BF for the floor area of the building work,
- a fit-out that requires the addition or modification to SFS, the applicant is required to pay standard DBA referral fees. (BF + TSFSF),
- a fit-out that requires a PS, the applicant is required to pay the PS, assessment and inspection fees.

10. Meeting Fees

Where QFES receives a request for meeting, the fees are determined by the type of meeting:

- for FEB meetings, the first three are part of the mandatory fee required by the BFSR. A fourth or subsequent meeting is charged at an hourly rate,
- for a preliminary meeting where the referral will be DTS the fee is charged at an hourly rate,
- for a minor performance meeting where a referral has been assessed by QFES, construction has commenced but the applicant wishes to have a further meeting to discuss possible amendments the applicant must pay the meeting fee plus the research fee for one subsystem,
- for a building approval officer (BAO) consultancy meeting the fee is charged at an hourly rate,
- additional fees may be required to be paid where a QFES representative is required to travel more than 70 kilometres, one way.

If an applicant is unsure of which meeting type they require or what fees are applicable they should, in the first instance consult with their assessment manager or, contact the QFES office at which the meeting will be held.

[See section 15 for fees.](#)

11. Combustible Cladding Rectification Fees

Where the BDA referral to QFES is for combustible cladding rectification work only, the BFSR requires the applicant pay a fee for each full hour QFES spends on assessing, inspecting, researching, consultation and meetings, plus a fee per 15-minute period, in excess of a full hour.

[See section 15 for fees.](#)

12. Marinas, Temporary and Special Structures Fees

Where marinas, temporary structures and special structures are referred to QFES for assessment and inspection the fees are charged at an hourly rate for either assessments or inspections.

[See section 15 for fees.](#)

13. Change of Class or Use Fees

Where a change of class or use is sought by an applicant for a BDA it may be required to be referred to QFES. The legislation that is involved requires different processing by QFES dependent upon the age of the building and what work is being proposed. Applicants should seek advice from QFES to determine how fees will be calculated.

14. Additional Information

Fees required to be paid by applicants are mandated by legislation. No member of QFES has the authority to discount or waive regulated fees legally required to be paid by an applicant for BDAs referred to QFES. QFES strongly advise that applicants ensure they are aware of the fees that apply to any referral to QFES prior to submission. The fee calculator is located at <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/planning-and-compliance/referral-agency-advice>.

The *Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008* is located at <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2008-0160>.

For more information, contact your local Community Safety Operations office. Contact details are located at <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/compliance-and-planning>.

15. Table of Fees

Referral	Fee structure	Fee
Preliminary Meeting for proposed BDA	First hour	Nil
	Per hour or part of an hour	\$682.85
FEB Meeting >3 meetings	Per hour or part of an hour	\$682.85
Fire engineering brief consultation fee		\$5,465.10
BAO Consultancy Meeting	Per hour or part of an hour	\$751.10
Minor Performance Meeting	Per meeting	\$3,514.40
Request for Comment on FEB	Per hour or part of an hour	\$751.10
Reassessment	Per hour or part of an hour	\$682.85
Interim Inspection	Per hour or part of an hour	\$682.85
Reinspection/Additional Inspection	First hour or part thereof	\$1,365.95
	Per additional hour or part of an hour	\$682.85
Marina, Temporary or Special Structure	Per hour or part of an hour	\$751.10
Combustible Cladding Rectification	Per full hour	\$265.50
	Per additional 15-minutes	\$65.75
<i>Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022 fee unit value</i>		\$1.060

