

## Safety Glass in Schools

Serious injury can result from glass breakage in the school environment. The most common causes of injury to both staff and students are window breakage as well as the breaking of glass panels in doors as a result of slamming or human impact.

### What is the Issue?

Glass windows, glass doors and glass panels in wooden doors are commonplace in Queensland schools. The busy school environment lends itself to the possibility of human impact with glass and the potential for injury.

The applicable Australian Standard for this purpose is *AS1288 Glass in Buildings*. **This applies for all new glazing, either through new construction or glass replacement and is not retrospective**, however schools should consider the risks of existing glazing. Glazing suppliers and installers can provide assistance to schools to identify the risks and prioritise in accordance with AS1288. The Department has instructed Building and Asset Services (BAS) formerly QBuild, to comply with this standard for all replacement and new glazing works undertaken in schools.

### What is the hazard?

Incidents usually occur in large secondary schools with high levels of pedestrian traffic. Injury typically resulted from the glass being pushed on directly, being accidentally bumped or the door/window slamming. In some instances windows and glass panels were punched or hit with an object such as a ball. Other areas of concern include: glass panels mistaken for doorways, glass panels at low levels, glass in buildings where specialised activities (e.g. gymnasiums) are undertaken as well as louvers, mirrors and display cabinets.

### What are the risks?

Glass related incidents generally cause lacerations which can be severe and cause serious injury (e.g. severed tendons or nerves of the hand and wrist).

### What are the controls?

Schools should refer to the Department's [Building Design Standards for DET Facilities](#) for guidance on this issue. **Parts 5.3.7 Windows, Glazing and Sky-lighting and 5.3.8 Doors.**  
<http://deta.qld.gov.au/corporate/pdf/building-design-standards-5.pdf>.

Laminated safety glass is to be used in accordance with revised statutory requirements *AS1288 Glass in Buildings* and in all identified risk situations as detailed in the Standard, including the following situations:

- All glass in doors;
- Glass to stairwells;
- All glazing within 5 metres of playgrounds;
- For marked play courts, and glazing up to 2 metres from ground level;
- Up to 1 meter above height of window located seating; and
- Other areas where high likelihood of human impact, including any existing glazing up to 1 meter from ground level

Where glass doors or windows are broken in schools, and these are repaired by BAS, laminated safety glass is to be used in accordance with the Design Requirements 5.3.7 and 8. Where broken glass doors or windows are not repaired by BAS, the onus rests with the Principal/Manager to ensure repairs are completed in accordance the Design Requirements, Building Code of Australia and supporting Australian Standards.

Schools are expected to assess risk of existing glass (particularly in situations outlined above) and develop a replacement strategy if considered necessary. Safety Glass should be clearly labelled (school cleaners should be advised not to remove safety glass markings).

### More information

Seek advice from local [Regional Facilities Manager](#).

Contact Regional [Senior Health and Safety Consultants](#) for health and safety enquiries

