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## Fire Safety in New Zealand Transient Accommodation Buildings

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Ideally fire safety codes should be rigorously based to mitigate risk to reasonably similar levels over the range of buildings and their usage. Reliable and consistent data on past fire incidents, their consequences and the overall building stock is therefore necessary. Unusually New Zealand has had a national Fire Incident Reporting System (FIRS) since 1975 with more consistent and complete data than other countries.

The authors also accessed coronial reports on fire fatalities since 2000 for all fatal fires in New Zealand except for single dwellings to compare fatality rates from fires in different types of transient accommodation (hotels, motels, boarding houses etc).

As details of rooms and bedspaces in different types of transient accommodation was not readily available, a list was accessed via an accommodation booking website and the websites of one quarter of these were used to assess their size, type of accommodation and quality as reflected by star ratings. The presence of sprinklers was assessed by inspecting interior photographs of rooms where available, and locating externally mounted sprinkler inlets using Google streetview.

Allowing for size, the presence of sprinklers was strongly a function of the quality (star rating) of the facility. Although most facilities are not sprinklered, about half the bedspaces are sprinklered. Overall the rate of casualties for all transient accommodation is almost double that for residential and for non-sprinklered accommodation almost four times that of residential. Of particular concern are large low quality facilities such as backpacker accommodation which may have poor fire separations and limited fire safety features.

It is recommended that the requirements for fire sprinkler protection within the New Zealand Building Code are increased and a requirement for retrospective upgrading of older buildings, where most accommodation fires occur.

### References:

1. New Zealand Fire Service, Fire Incident Reporting System, Statistics Report, or NZFS Emergency Incident Statistics, or similar, various volumes 1975-2011, NZFS. see <http://www.fire.org.nz/About-Us/Factsand-Figures/Pages/Statistics-Data-Fields.aspx> for more information.
2. NZ Tourism Guide. [www.tourism.net.nz](http://www.tourism.net.nz), accessed October-December 2013.

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