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Fire compliance & regulations for loadbearing walls: a technical update

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1. **What is the difference between a Performance Solution and a Deemed-to-Satisfy (DTS) Solution in the National Construction Code (NCC)?**

   A Performance Solution is a flexible approach that meets the NCC's Performance Requirements through testing, expert judgement, or calculations. A Deemed-to-Satisfy (DTS) Solution follows the NCC's pre-set, prescriptive requirements.

2. **What should be checked when reviewing compliance certificates for AS 5637.1?**

   Certificates must specify the exact test used—either AS ISO 9705 (full-scale room test) or AS/NZS 3837 (cone calorimeter test)—to ensure proper compliance and accuracy.

3. **What does AS 5113 evaluate?**

   AS 5113 assesses facade performance in fire scenarios, focusing on fire spread and material delamination.

4. **What is Fire Resistance Level (FRL) in the NCC?**

   Fire Resistance Level (FRL) is a measure of a building element's ability to withstand fire, expressed in three numbers representing Structural Adequacy, Integrity and Insulation in minutes.

5. **How does AS 1530.4 apply to walls with openings, penetrations, or joints?**

   AS 1530.4 fire testing is typically conducted on walls without openings, penetrations, or joints unless the test specifically focuses on these elements. If a wall includes openings, penetrations, or joints, it must be separately tested to AS 1530.4 to verify its fire resistance performance.

6. **What additional fire testing is required for internal walls with an FRL?**

   Internal walls requiring an FRL must also comply with AS ISO 9705 or AS/NZS 3837, depending on the product used. Meeting an FRL alone is not enough—fire resistance should also consider smoke development and material flammability/ignitability.

Competency Codes: P12, PC16, PC39, PC45.