

Changes to the Building Code for Emergency Lighting

In New Zealand the Building code for emergency lighting Clause F6 'Visibility in Escape Routes' now states that specified features must be made 'reasonably visibly' This is a significant change to the previous wording that stated buildings must be provided with 'adequate lighting' in escape routes. This means photoluminescent material can be used on stair edges and for path and hazard marking to meet F6.

Christchurch based company, Ecoglo, have developed and manufactured photoluminescent step edge products which have been increasing safety in buildings large and small throughout the world for the last 10 years.

Ecoglo were exhibiting in New York last month at "Buildings of New York". As a result of a Task Force into safety, following the 2001 World Trade Centre attack, all buildings in New York over 7 stories high must now have photoluminescent markings in stairwells. Following the 1993 bombing, when occupants struggled to exit in darkness, the World Trade Centre installed photoluminescent markings into the stairwells. This made a difference to egress speeds in the 9/11 attack as occupants could clearly see their way down the stairs. The legislation making photoluminescent markings mandatory for all highrise was passed in May 2005.

Ecoglo were pleased to note that they were the only exhibitors at Buildings of New York this year. The most likely reason for this is that Ecoglo have advanced the technology to create photoluminescent products that are significantly more durable than the tape and paint options of other operators.

In these days of throwaway quality Ecoglo were determined to create a product that would last. Engineer, Mark Watson,



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developed a unique automated process which applies and then bakes in anti-slip and photoluminescent powders. The 180° heat applied integrally bonds the powder to the aluminium meaning thousands of people can walk on Ecoglo products thousands of times with no wear and tear.

Building owners are very aware how often electrical lighting goes out and battery back-up lighting is either too slow to start, it fails completely or it does not operate for the duration of the blackout. Two recent example of this are when the backup generator at Parliament failed in May leaving Helen Clark and her Ministers in the dark, and when the backup generator in Southland Hospital failed to kick in during a power cut in July (critical equipment fortunately had it own power supply). Ecoglo products are failsafe as they are continually absorbing either natural light or existing electrical light. When the lights go out they glow brightly for many hours giving people confidence in exiting, even in emergency situations.

Some steps are just too hard to see, whether it be day or night. With Ecoglo you can clearly see the step whatever the light conditions as the combination of photoluminescence and the non-slip mat creates superior step edge contrast.

With the acceptance of photoluminescent material into the Building Code architects now have the opportunity to specify new electricity saving, cost effective options.



Ecoglo step nosings incorporate a hard wearing anti-slip mat as well as a photoluminescent component to prevent slips and falls 24 hours a day.