

A BRIGHT DAY FOR PHOTOLUMINESCENT EXIT SIGNS

Standards Australia has released a Technical Specification outlining the performance requirements for Hybrid Photoluminescent Exit Signage – delivering an important practical guide to installers and operators while helping to bring this exciting technology to ever-growing mainstream markets.



Photoluminescent (PL) Exit Signage has won widespread acceptance around the world over the last two decades, due in large measure to the low maintenance and safety of 'glow in the dark' materials, which remain visible in emergency situations even if electrical power has been lost.

This technology is designed to supersede traditional exit signage, which typically features an electric light inside an opaque, box-style housing, supported by a back-up battery in case of loss of electricity. Facility managers, in particular, have been quick to embrace PL signage technologies in order to avoid time-consuming and costly battery checks and replacements, and to equip buildings with enhanced signage reliability.

PL Exit Signage is popular in many of the most tightly regulated jurisdictions in the world, including USA (under the terms of UL 924) and Canada (CAN/ULC-S572). Similarly, in Australia PL Exit Signage has been permitted for almost a decade under the provisions of the National Construction Code (NCC), as defined in EP4.2 of NCC Volume 1. In terms of application, NCC Specification E4.8 provides a deemed-to-satisfy pathway for installers seeking to meet the requirements of EP4.2.

The new Technical Specification SA TS 5367:2021 Photoluminescent exit signage – Product specification, installation

and operation is designed to sit alongside the NCC documentation as an alternative deemed-to-satisfy solution, and to provide industry practitioners with an objective, detailed toolkit for achieving best practice.

It is worth noting that the 25-page SA TS 5367:2021 relates only to Hybrid PL Exit Signage, i.e. PL signs fitted with their own adjacent LED luminaires to keep panels 'charged'. It is hoped that a similar TS will be created in the near future for Passive PL Exit Signage, which refers to PL signs that are charged solely by surrounding light without the need for supporting luminaires.

Broad Industry Support

SA TS 5367:2021 was produced by Standards Australia's committee LG-011, which comprises voluntary members from a diverse range of industry sectors and peak bodies. The following professional members and allied entities have endorsed SA TS 5367:2021: Australian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council, Australian Building Codes Board, Australian Institute of Building Surveyors, Electrical Regulatory Authorities Council, Fire Protection Association Australia, Photoluminescent Lighting Council, University of NSW.



Specification Made Easy

SA TS 5367:2021 contains a comprehensive database of information about topics such as PL Exit Signage graphical requirements (sign colours, viewing distance, pictorial element dimensions, as well as luminance under normal power conditions, etc); luminance performance testing of Hybrid signs under power loss conditions; as well as charging light source life (LSL) ratings; electrical safety and electromagnetic compatibility of Hybrid signs; and more.

These carefully defined parameters provide industry practitioners and customers with an objective set of minimum requirements for product compliance.

Just as importantly, a clear set of installation guidelines offers installers and customers full confidence that signage products have been fitted appropriately for peak safety and performance. Topics addressed include suitable mounting methodologies, correct mounting height, the electrical connection of Hybrid signs, as well as labelling and on-site identification requirements for devices.

“The release of SA TS 5367:2021 is a wonderful milestone for the PL industry as a whole, and for PL Exit Signage specifically,” says Trevor Dimond, Chairman of the Photoluminescent Lighting Council, and Executive Chairman of Ecoglo Australia. “We embarked on a mission to provide the market with an up-to-date, independently authorised set of benchmarks for proper product specification and fitout, and the result exceeds expectations.

“It’s never easy gaining any kind of regulatory ratification of new-generation products, and we’ve certainly encountered headwinds from conventional exit signage sectors, but persistence pays and the market is the real winner.”

According to Mr Dimond, another valuable attribute of SA TS 5367:2021 is its extensive collection of Appendices, which describe both normative and informative themes in an easy-to-understand manner. Appendix B, for instance, provides a basic overview of PL technology under the heading ‘Introduction to photoluminescent technology for exit signage’, which acknowledges that building professionals not only want to source the best possible devices for a given application, but they also need to understand how the devices work.

The extremely useful Appendix F offers an ‘Example of a test report format’, so facility managers can see instantly which Standards and clauses are relevant to an array of formal test criteria.

“The release of SA TS 5367:2021 represents a bright day for PL Exit Signage in Australasia, and we look forward to working with industry partners to make our built environment safer over years,” says Mr Dimond.

For more information visit
Photoluminescent Lighting Council at
<https://plcouncil.com.au>

For more information about Ecoglo’s photoluminescent signage, step nosing and marker products, or to obtain high-resolution image files, please contact:

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