WHAT IS AN INBUILT AMPLIFICATION SYSTEM?

The Building Code of Australia requires Hearing Augmentation to be installed in public buildings where there is an inbuilt amplification system.

So, what is the definition of inbuilt amplification?

The Performance Requirement of DP9 states:

An inbuilt communication system for entry, information, entertainment, or for the provision of a service, must be suitable for occupants who are deaf or hearing impaired.

The first line of BCA D3.7 (Deemed to Satisfy requirement of DP9) states:

(a) A hearing augmentation system must be provided where an inbuilt amplification system, other than one used only for emergency warning, is installed etc.

INBUILT means permanently installed.

A TV mounted on the wall is definitely permanently installed. Conversely, a portable PA system set up for the day does not qualify as inbuilt.

AMPLIFICATION means it has an amplifier. Any electronic device that reproduces sound via a speaker requires an amplifier. Any audio system that has a speaker includes amplification.

CONSEQUENTLY, any installed audio system has inbuilt amplification, whether it is in a television, interactive whiteboard, AV system, music system etc.

Ethics

What has been stated above deals with the technicalities of the BCA, but another aspect is the ethical/moral issue around hearing loss.

That is, regardless of the source of the sound, whether amplification is provided or not, whether permanent or portable, then people with a hearing loss also deserve to understand what is being heard and understood by others.

This is reinforced in BCA DP9.

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Examples

Examples of Inbuilt Amplification Systems
- Installed AV system
- Installed interactive whiteboard
- Phone system used as a public address system
- Installed PA system
- Wall Mounted Television
- Television sitting on a shelf or cupboard, connected to a permanent antenna.
- Paging System
- Music System
- EWIS also used for paging, background music or any other purpose than EWIS

Examples of what is not an Inbuilt Amplification System
- A whiteboard on wheels
- A portable PA system
- A television on a wheeled trolley

Please note that this document does not constitute a legal interpretation of the BCA and is the opinion of the Technical Manager of ClearaSound, based on 30 years of experience with Hearing Augmentation, and who is himself hearing impaired.

Wireless Systems

In some venues, a transmitter is permanently installed, and receivers are issued to some or all listeners.

As part of the system is permanent, this meets the definition of “inbuilt amplification system” receivers must be supplied with the options of neckloops and headphones to comply with D3.7 and DP9.

Where all listeners are required to bring their own receivers, then receivers are not required to be provided, as a complete amplification “system” is not being provided. This does not preclude the venue operator from providing receivers with neckloops and headsets as a gesture of goodwill.

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References

BCA / Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010

DP9 The Performance Requirement of DP9 states:
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D3.7 (a) The Deemed to satisfy requirement of DP9 states:
A hearing augmentation system must be provided where an inbuilt amplification system, other than one used only for emergency warning, is installed etc.

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About the Author

Andrew Stewart is qualified in electronics, and has been working for ClearaSound for over 30 years of installing, testing and commissioning Hearing Augmentation Systems. He and his team have conducted their own research of comparison methodologies of installing hearing loop systems and designed and constructed test equipment.

Installations include Sydney Opera House, First Class Qantas Club Singapore, art galleries, museums, theatres and many others.

Andrew was a key leader in the development of AS 1428.5 - 2010, the authoritative document on Hearing Augmentation in Australia.

He is also a life member of Deafness Forum of Australia (the peak body for hearing impaired people in Australia) and continues to represent them, as he has on many committees for over 15 years.

Andrew has been hearing impaired all his life, with a progressive loss, and now wears two cochlear implants. He has 9 other family members who wear hearing aids and or cochlear implants.
Why choose ClearaSound?

- Specialising in Hearing Augmentation Systems for over 30 years.
- Innovative technical team who conduct research and development of our Hearing Augmentation systems for improved outcomes.
- Over 30 years of design, installation and commissioning of Hearing Augmentation systems (loop systems, FM systems, sound field systems and public address systems) for a range of public access buildings, for small halls to significant buildings and venues.
- Hearing Augmentation seminars for building professionals.
- Provide training in Hearing Augmentation for Access Consultants, Building certifiers and surveyors, and architects.

Legal

The information provided is general advice only and does not take into account your building site objectives, building site design and or building materials used or other relevant factors and cannot be relied upon for your specific needs therefore ClearaSound, its directors, agents and or employees do not accept any liability or responsibility arising in any way from the use of the information provided. The information should not be relied upon for accuracy or completeness.

Further information

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