

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

APPLYING FOR A BUILDING CONSENT

You, or a representative such as your builder or architect, may apply for a Building Consent by filling in an application form and supplying the necessary information.

The application form lists each section of the Building Code and asks you to show how your proposed project meets the relevant requirements. The Building Consent Authority will also ask you for construction drawings, specifications and other necessary information to support your application.

The amount of information required will depend on the complexity of your building project. As a minimum, you are likely to need to include proof of ownership (e.g. a recent Certificate of Title) and detailed plans showing the site, floor plan, elevations, cross-sections, foundation details, drainage and bracing.

Attached to the application form is a checklist that you should complete. This checklist reminds you of the documentation that will be required, and will be used to check your application for completeness when you apply.

HOW YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE PROCESSED

Your application will first be vetted by a Building Consent Officer (who will use the checklist) to see if you have supplied all the documentation. Once accepted, the Council will then issue a Project Information Memorandum.

The Project Information Memorandum will tell you how your project will be affected by legislation other than the Building Act, eg. if you will need a resource consent, or if your project is affected by any Council by-laws. It will also tell you about any special features of the land that the Council knows of, such as erosion or the presence of hazardous materials, the details of any storm-water or wastewater systems relating to or near the site, and if you will need to pay a development contribution.

Once the Project Information Memorandum is issued, the application is examined for compliance with the Building Code. You may be asked for clarification on certain aspects of the plans and specifications and the process may stop until you have supplied that information. Once the application has been checked and it is considered that compliance will be achieved if the project were to be built in accordance with the plans and specifications, you will be asked to pay any further fees and levies outstanding before the Building Consent is issued.

INSPECTIONS

Once you begin building, an official from the Building Consent Authority will inspect your project regularly to ensure the work meets the appropriate standards and the consented plans and specifications.

The inspection requirements for your project will be specified in your Building Consent, but typically they will cover the foundations, framing and insulation, plumbing, drainage, cladding and flashings, and the finished building.

Without regular inspections there may not be enough information for assurance that the work has been done to the appropriate standard on record to issue a Code Compliance Certificate at the end of the project. By the time you finish the project it is likely to be too late, eg. the framing can no longer be checked without removing all the interior linings.

Builders and installers usually arrange inspections relevant to their work, but property owners are ultimately responsible. Usually at least one day's notice is required to arrange an inspection. You should check that your builder or installer is doing this.

If any of your building work is not approved, you or your builder will be asked to rectify it, and in the more serious cases issued a Notice to Fix detailing what must be done and by when.

Generally, gas and electrical work is not inspected. Any work of this nature must be done by a registered licensed tradesman and on completion they will give you a signed Energy Work Certificate. You will need the Energy Work Certificates to get a Code Compliance Certificate.

Typically inspections may include the following stages in the construction process:

- Foundations
- Framing
- Cladding and Flashings
- Pre-lining
- Plumbing
- Drainage
- Finished building

FINAL SIGN-OFF : CODE COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATES

A Code Compliance Certificate is issued after the final inspection of the finished building project if all the work and related documentation is approved. A Code Compliance Certificate confirms that the Building Consent Authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the completed project meets the appropriate standards and the consented plans and specifications.

Code Compliance Certificates are important. When you sell your property, a Code Compliance Certificate shows the buyer that the building or renovations were done properly. If you build a house or unit for the purpose of selling it immediately (ie. act as a residential property developer) the Building Act prohibits you from selling the property without a Code Compliance Certificate.

Because a Code Compliance Certificate is issued after the final inspection if the building has been built in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, it is important that if you think you are going to change your plans in any way during the project, you advise the Building Consent Authority and get approval for the amendment first.

In addition to having completed the building work correctly, to get a Code Compliance Certificate you will need to supply all the relevant Energy Work Certificates, producer statements, etc., and ensure that any outstanding fees and development contributions have been paid.

An application for a Code Compliance Certificate is compulsory and the responsibility of the home owner. Where you have not submitted an application for a Code Compliance Certificate within two years from the date the Building Consent was issued, the Building Consent Authority will follow this up with a letter to you (unless you have agreed an extension with the Building Consent Authority, which you would normally do at the time of your Building Consent application.)

The Building Act says the application must be considered within 20 working days, however to meet that time limit there are certain time limits on re-inspection where work is found on the final inspection not to be completed or does not comply, and where the necessary documentation has not been provided.

Where work is found not to be complete or not to comply, you have seven days to complete or fix the work and ask for a re-inspection. If you do not do that within the seven days, your application for a Code Compliance Certificate will be refused.

Where the documentation is incomplete or inadequate, the application can be suspended for up to 28 days. If you do not supply the documentation within that time, then your application for a Code Compliance Certificate will be refused.

If your application for a Code Compliance Certificate has been refused, you are entitled to re-apply for it within a period of two years from the date that the Building Consent that authorised the work was issued. There will be another fee to pay for this and it is treated as a completely new application.

To avoid these hassles, you are well advised to make sure that all the work is totally complete and in accordance with the plans and specifications authorised by the Building Consent, and provide the Building Consent Authority with all the relevant documentation at the outset when making the application. By doing this, you will make the process a lot easier.