

BUILDING CONSENT AUTHORITY

T-19 CONSENT PROCESSING

Roles and Responsibilities

- **TEAM LEADER BUILDING**

Responsible for ensuring the building consent authority has the appropriate systems in place for processing and issuing a building consent.

Responsible for ensuring building officers and administration staff have the appropriate levels of technical competence to fulfil their functions and duties.

Responsible for ensuring the building consent authority has the appropriate quality systems in place and that these systems are being followed. Responsible for measuring the ongoing effectiveness of the quality systems.

- **SENIOR CONSENTS OFFICER**

Responsible for identifying, managing, obtaining and collating all required building consent inputs and outputs prior to building consent issue.

Responsible for signing off on completed building consent having demonstrated compliance with the Building Code.

- **BUILDING OFFICER (APPROVALS)**

Responsible for assessing building consent applications and providing the correct outputs to the Senior Consents officer.

- **CONSENTS COORDINATOR**

Responsible for the collation of consent documents prior to assessment for code compliance.

Responsible for assessment of engineering or other specialist consultant review of application documents and for directing the documents to that specialist through the senior consents officer.

Responsible for designating the building category (1, 2, or 3 as defined in the classification of buildings definition in the legend in T-17.3 Skills Matrix) on the application cover sheet for the allocation of tasks as defined in the skills matrix per officer.

Background

1. A building consent is the formal approval, under section 49 of the Building Act 2004, for an applicant to undertake building work.
2. Except in specific circumstances (refer to section 41) a person may not carry out building work without a building consent. Even if a building consent is not required, all building work must be undertaken in accordance with the Building Code.
3. Building consent must be granted or refused by a building consent authority within a 20-day time-frame.
4. Because a code compliance certificate is issued against the building consent documentation, it is important the documentation reflects accurately what is to be built. Changes during construction may require an amendment to the building consent.
5. Building consent applications are required to be submitted on Form 2 from the Building Regulations 2005. Information required to accompany the form includes:

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- identification of Building Code Clauses that are to be complied with
 - waivers/modifications to the Building Code Clauses and the reasons for this
 - development contribution notice on Form 3, if applicable
 - any resource consent certificates attached under section 37
 - the project information memorandum, if this has been previously applied for
 - plans and specifications required by the Regulations, and by the building consent authority
 - the list of specified systems for the building (whether new, existing or altered)
 - any other information that the building consent authority reasonably requires.
6. Although the Building Act 2004 makes no reference to the use of producer statements, building consent authorities may, as an established industry practice, continue to accept producer statements as a mechanism for establishing compliance with all or any part of the Building Code.
7. A building consent authority may request further information within the 20-day time-frame. If a request for further information is made the 20-day period is suspended until the required information is provided.
8. During building consent processing certain building consent applications are required to be sent to the New Zealand Fire Service Commission to allow them to provide advice regarding means of escape and the need for people authorised to enter the building for fire fighting. The New Zealand Fire Service Commission is required to provide this advice in the form of a memorandum within 10 working days. If this advice is not received, the building consent authority may proceed to determine the application without the New Zealand Fire Service Commission input.
9. Before determining whether or not to grant the building consent the building consent authority is required to take into account:
- Any warnings or bans.
 - Advice provided by the New Zealand Fire Service Commission.
 - If the proposed building work involves alterations, change of use or subdivision: whether the building in its new use will:
 - comply, as near as is reasonably practicable, with every provision of the Building Code that relates to means of escape from fire, protection of other property, sanitary facilities, structural performance and fire rating performance and access and facilities for people with disabilities (if required by section 118), and
 - continue to comply with the other provisions of the Building Code to at least the same extent as before the alteration or change of use.
 - Whether an extension of life or the specified life of the building is appropriate to the application.
 - Whether any work relates to restricted work.
- Note:** The restricted building work provision does not come into effect until 30 November 2009.
10. The building consent must be issued on Form 5 of the Regulations if the building consent authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the provisions of the Building Code will be met if the building work is completed in accordance with the plans and specifications that accompany the application.

Procedure

PRELIMINARY

Consent assessment (T-4)

After administration staff have completed procedures outlined in T-4 (ie, they have ascertained that Form 2 is properly completed, fees and charges have been collected, and the application information has been checked off against the building consent application checklist and accepted into the system), the consent will be forwarded to the building consents team to undertake task allocation in accordance with T-17.

Task allocation (T-17 and 17.1)

The Consents Coordinator will allocate the processing of the building consent to a building officer who will be responsible for ensuring the building consent information is distributed to the appropriately skilled building

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officers for processing (this may include external specialists/consultants, and New Zealand Fire Service Commission).

The Senior Consents Officer will generally be responsible for managing processing time-frames.

The Consents Coordinator will assign in writing the numbers 1, 2, or 3 to the cover sheet of the application so that the Building Officer can select to his approved skill designation.

1 FILE ASSESSMENT and COMPETENCE CHECK

1.1 The Consents Coordinator will allocate processing of Building Code Clauses to building officers according to competency as identified on the skills matrix.

1.2 Each building officer will assess the work allocated to determine whether:

- it is within their scope of competence
- their workload will allow them to complete the work within the required time-frames.

If not, they will return the work to the Consents Coordinator for reallocation.

2 BUILDING OFFICER ASSESSES COMPLIANCE

2.1 The building officer will assess the plans and specifications to ensure Building Code compliance is properly demonstrated. Care should be taken to ensure the dates of issue of Compliance Documents that may be referenced as methods of achieving compliance are current. Particular care is required to ensure manufacturer details or products that are nominated and proposed for use comply with the Building Code.

2.2 There are a number of matters that require particular consideration.

PRODUCER STATEMENTS (T-07)

2.3 The building consent authority has clear policy and procedures for the acceptance and management of producer statements.

2.4 Producer statements can only be assessed by competent building officers in accordance with section T-07.

2.5 Producer statements should be processed in accordance with T-07.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS (T-34)

2.6 If an application contains any alternative solutions, the building officer will determine whether the assessment of the proposed solution is within their scope of competence. If not, this component of the application will be returned to the Consents Coordinator for reallocation.

2.7 If the proposed alternative solution is not considered to meet Building Code provisions, the application will be suspended and the applicant advised that further information is required.

2.8 The building officer will assess whether the alternative solution satisfies the provisions of the Building Code. If so, the basis for the solution's acceptance will be recorded, ideally specific Code Clauses, objectives, functional requirements and performance criteria against which the solution(s) have been considered will be recorded.

2.9 The building officer will then advise the Senior Consents Officer that this component has been completed and return the records along with any specific building consent conditions or inspection requirements that are considered necessary to ensure compliance is achieved.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE BUILDING ACT

2.10 As well as assessing compliance with Building Code Clauses, a building officer is required to ensure Building Act provisions are satisfied. Specific sections requiring consideration include:

- sections 3 and 4 purposes and principles
- matters arising from the project information memorandum (T-8)
- matters arising from the New Zealand Fire Service Commission memorandum (T-11 and T-11.1)
- natural hazards (T-12.1)
- building on two or more allotments (T-13).
- alterations to existing buildings (T-14.1)

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- change of use (T-14)
- specified intended life (T-14.2)
- extending the life of a building with a specified intended life (T-14.3)
- New Zealand Historic Places Trust (T-18)
- subdivision (T-20)
- licensed building practitioners (T-22 - see note)
- restricted building work (T-26 - see note)
- requests for modifications and waivers (T-23)
- warnings and bans (T-43)
- Compliance Documents (T-40 and T-02)
- public use premises (T-47)
- amendments (T-21).

Generally, a checklist will be used to record the checking of the above.

Note: This provision does not come into effect until 30 November 2009.

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MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PROJECT INFORMATION MEMORANDUM (T-08)

- 2.11 The project information memorandum requires an assessment to determine whether there are any Resource Management Act matters or on-site conditions that may affect the building work such as:
- building over public drains
 - collection or disposal of storm water or sewerage
 - installation or availability of services from network utility operators
 - wind, earthquake or corrosion zones
 - dangerous goods implications
 - health implications
 - resource management matters like height to boundary, protected trees etc.
- 2.12 When satisfied that all project information memorandum advice has been considered and that any Resource Management Act or on-site matters have been properly addressed, the building officer will sign off this portion of the procedure and formally advise the applicant if there are any specific building consent conditions that need to be applied.
- 2.13 If a development contribution is required and has not been paid, its payment should become a condition of building consent (this must be paid prior to code compliance certificate issue).

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS (T-09)

- 2.14 Development contributions are imposed by the territorial authority, who will require payment on or before the issue of the code compliance certificate. The payment of this levy may be waived if a written agreement has been entered into between the territorial authority and the owner.
- 2.15 As it is possible that the territorial authority’s only involvement is the issuing of the project information memorandum, it may not be possible for the territorial authority to place a condition on a consent.
Note: In the case of a dam, the territorial authority is responsible for transitional provisions in respect of dams and will only issue a building consent if the work involves a building other than a dam after the regional authority has become a building consent authority.
- 2.16 The community assets group (CAG) will:
- Check the project information memorandum issued by the PIM technical officer
 - Identify if a development contribution is payable
 - Liaise with the territorial authority and discuss how this process should be managed
 - Require, as a condition of consent, that the development contribution be paid to the territorial authority before the code compliance certificate can be issued (refer to section 36).

NEW ZEALAND FIRE SERVICE COMMISSION NOTIFICATION (REFER TO T-11 AND 11.1)

- 2.17 In cases where the New Zealand Fire Service Commission has provided a memorandum, a building officer will need to assess this information to determine whether the design work requires amending.
- 2.18 If amendments are required then these will generally be discussed with the applicant and the appropriate course of action will be implemented.
- 2.19 If no action is required, the building officer will sign off this portion of work, determine any necessary inspection requirements and conditions, and advise the applicant accordingly.

NATURAL HAZARDS (T-12.1)

- 2.20 If the project information memorandum has identified that the proposed building work may be affected by natural hazards (like inundation, subsidence, slippage etc), a building officer will need to determine whether:
- the proposed building work will worsen or accelerate the natural hazard
 - adequate provision has been made to protect the land and/or other property
 - it is reasonable to issue a waiver or modification to the Building Code in respect to the natural hazard concerned
 - the building consent authority needs to notify the consent to the parties listed in section 73 of the Act.
- 2.21 When all matters have been considered, the building officer will formally advise the applicant whether or not the building consent can be issued and, if so, whether there are any specific conditions that need to be applied.

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BUILDING ON TWO OR MORE ALLOTMENTS (T-13) (SECTIONS 75 – 83)

- 2.22 A building consent authority is not permitted to grant a building consent for building work if:
- it is identified that the building is being constructed over boundaries of two or more allotments under the same ownership in fee simple, and
 - it is not separated by a party wall, and
 - there is no application for amalgamation of the titles.
- The building consent cannot be granted until the territorial authority has issued a certificate imposing a condition that the specified allotments may not be transferred or leased as per condition set out in section 75(2).
- 2.23 The building officer will need to check that the PIM Technical Officer has issued the required certificate and lodged a copy with the Registrar-General of Land.
- 2.24 If the necessary conditions set out in section 75(2) have not been imposed and fulfilled, the building officer will suspend the application and notify the applicant.
- 2.25 When satisfied that the applicant has fulfilled the necessary conditions, the building officer will sign off this portion of the building consent work and advise the building consent authority accordingly.

ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS (T-14.1) (section 112)

- 2.26 A building consent authority may not grant a building consent for the alteration of an existing building, or part of an existing building, unless the building consent authority is satisfied that after the alteration the building will:
- comply as nearly as is reasonably practicable with every provision of the Building Code that relates to:
 - means of escape from fire
 - access and facilities for people with disabilities
 - continue to comply with the provisions of the Building Code to at least the same extent as before the alteration.

However, in certain circumstances as set out in section 112(2), a building consent authority may allow alterations other than in compliance with the Building Code providing it has given the owner written notice to do so.

- 2.27 If a building consent involves alteration to an existing building and the plans and specifications do not demonstrate compliance with means of escape and accessibility provisions, a building officer will need to determine whether to permit this in accordance with section 112.
- 2.28 If documents indicate less than full compliance and a notice from the building consent authority has not been provided, the building officer is required to suspend the building consent and advise the applicant to either:
- Apply for a notice allowing less than full compliance or
 - provide amended plans demonstrating full compliance.
- 2.29 Once satisfied that the provisions of section 112 are met the building officer will note that this component of the building consent application has been completed and advise of any building consent conditions that may need to be imposed.

CHANGE OF USE OR SUBDIVISION OF A BUILDING (T-14) (sections 114 – 120)

- 2.30 If a building consent application involves a change of use or subdivision of an existing building, best practice dictates that **before** the building consent is issued by the building consent authority:
- the Senior Consents Officer must issue written notice to the building owner confirming that it has agreed to the proposed change of use or subdivision, and
 - in the case of subdivision, that the Senior Consents Officer must obtain a copy of the certificate issued under section 224(f) of the Resource Management Act giving effect to the subdivision.
- 2.31 If the necessary documentation has not been provided, the application should be suspended and the applicant advised that further information is required.

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SPECIFIED INTENDED LIFE (T-14.2) OR EXTENSION OF LIFE (T-14.3) (section 113)

- 2.32 Only a building consent authority can grant a building consent for buildings having a specified intended life of 50 years or less.

NEW ZEALAND HISTORIC PLACES TRUST APPROVAL INPUTS (T-18) (section 39)

- 2.33 When a proposed building work involves a heritage site, before a building consent can be issued the building officer will ensure the New Zealand Historic Places Trust has provided authorisation for the proposed building work to proceed.

Note: The *New Zealand Historical Places Trust* requires that the owner provide a copy of the application together with sufficient detail to explain the nature and extent of the work involved.

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust will either sign the plans or issue a letter confirming the approval or refusal of the application.

- 2.34 If authorisation has **not** been granted, the applicant will need to be advised that the building work cannot proceed until the required authorisation is obtained.
- 2.35 If satisfied that authorisation has been granted, the building officer will advise the applicant that this component of the building consent application has been processed and approved. The building officer will also advise the applicant of any building consent conditions that may need to be imposed, along with any specific inspections or inspection requirements.

RESTRICTED BUILDING WORK (T-26) (sections 84 – 88)

Note: The restricted building work provision does not come into effect until 30 November 2009.

- 2.36 If a building consent application involves restricted building work, the building officer will need to first identify the extent and classification of the proposed restricted work.
- 2.37 The building officer should then determine whether the designer holds the appropriate licence for the scope of the restricted work that is proposed and whether they have provided the appropriate level of information.
- 2.38 The building officer will then check the registration details of the licensed building practitioner supervising or undertaking the proposed work.
- 2.39 If the building officer is not satisfied with the level of information provided, the application may be suspended and the applicant contacted and requested to provide further information.
- 2.40 If satisfied that the appropriate level of information has been provided, the building officer will advise the applicant accordingly. If there are any building consent conditions or endorsements to be applied or any specific inspection requirements, the building officer will inform the applicant of these.

REQUESTS FOR MODIFICATIONS AND WAIVERS (T-23) (sections 67 – 70)

- 2.41 Only a building consent authority that is a territorial authority can approve modifications or waivers to the Building Code. The territorial authority is required to notify the Chief Executive of the Department of Building and Housing when it issues a waiver or modification to the Building Code.
- 2.42 The building consent authority that is a territorial authority must have due regard to section 4 of the Building Act 2004. In achieving the purposes of the Act, the building consent authority must take into account the principles that are relevant to the performance of functions or duties imposed by the Act (refer to section 4.2 (a-p)).
- 2.43 However, only the Chief Executive of the Department of Building and Housing can approve a waiver or modification to the Building Code for:
- an existing building to which section 118 applies, and
 - access and facilities for use by people with disabilities.
- 2.44 If any part of an application for a building consent relates to energy work and involves the granting or refusal of a waiver or modification in relation to the building work, then the application must be referred to the territorial authority who in turn must refer this part of the application to the Chief Executive of the Department of Building and Housing.
- 2.45 If a building consent application involves a modification or waiver to the Building Code, the building officer will determine if compliance with the Building Code can be achieved. The application is required to include:

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- drawings
- details
- description
- explanation – what is the reason for the request, why it is unreasonable to comply, what are the mitigating factors?

The building officer needs to consider what the mitigating factors are and to what degree they will lessen compliance or non-compliance.

- 2.46 If satisfied, the building officer will formally record the reasons for approval and forward this information to the applicant along with any building consent conditions and inspection requirements that are deemed appropriate.
- 2.47 The applicant will be responsible for ensuring the Chief Executive of the Department of Building and Housing is notified of the waiver or modification.
- 2.48 The building officer should ensure the waiver or modification is recorded in a manner that will warn the future building owners of any implications that might be associated with the modification or waiver.

PUBLIC PREMISES BEING OCCUPIED DURING CONSTRUCTION (T-47) (section 363)

- 2.49 If the proposed building work relates to public premises and all or any part of the building is intended to be occupied during construction or before work has been completed, best practice dictates that the building officer will give careful assessment to the proposed construction method.
Note: Construction method – this will generally be provided in the form of a document outlining how the proposed construction work will be staged and managed.
- 2.50 The construction method should enable the building officer to be satisfied on reasonable grounds that the building can be safely occupied during construction. The construction methodology will clearly demonstrate how existing specified systems and means of escape will be maintained.
- 2.51 If the construction method does not satisfactorily demonstrate that occupant safety will be maintained, the application should be suspended and the applicant contacted and requested to provide further information.
- 2.52 When satisfied that the building can be safely occupied during construction, the building officer will advise the building consent authority that this component of the work has been completed.
- 2.53 As a condition of building consent issue, the building consent authority will require the building owner to obtain a certificate for public use before occupation of the building occurs.
Note: A certificate for public use is likely to require some form of inspection prior to issue.

AMENDMENTS (T-21 to T-21.3) (SECTION 45(5))

- 2.54 Amendments (sometimes called ‘variations’) should be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.55 The building approvals Coordinator shall determine the processing path for the amendment and distribute the amended information to the building officer for processing.
- 2.56 Where the amendment is **minor** and does not affect or reduce the level of compliance against the Building Code, it is not considered necessary for a new building consent to be applied for. However, it is important that this information is assessed to confirm suitability of the component being substituted.
- 2.57 The building consent authority should maintain records together with relevant plans depicting the work involved. The date and nature of the changes must be identifiable from the records.

Examples:

- Substituting one internal lining for a similar internal lining.
 - Substituting the type of timber treatment.
 - Minor wall bracing changes.
 - Changing a room’s layout (eg, the position of fixtures in a bathroom).
 - Changing one brand of insulation for another.
 - Drainage as-built plans.
- 2.58 Where the amendment is **significant**, such as:
- a change to the building envelope or footprint

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- a new building consent shall be applied for,
- any structural change (other than minor bracing changes)
 - changes to claddings
 - a change that affects a producer statement

then an amendment should be applied for.

- 2.59 If the proposed building work relates to an amendment to an existing building consent, a copy of the original building consent and project information memorandum should be assessed to determine the implications that the amendments will have on it.
- 2.60 If the amendments involve changes to the building envelope or if there are hazards that were not identified on the original project information memorandum, a new project information memorandum application is required.
Note: If a significant period of time has elapsed there may be a need for a new project information memorandum as additional information may now be available.
- 2.61 Amendments to a building consent may result in a need to amend the building consent time-frame in relation to issue of the code compliance certificate.
- 2.62 If the amendments result in a building cost increase, fees and levies will need to be recalculated in accordance with T-24.
- 2.63 It may be necessary to revisit inspection requirements, producer statements and/or conditions of consent to assess whether these are affected by the amendment.
- 2.64 When satisfied that all required inputs have been obtained and assessed, redundant information and plans should be marked as ‘superseded’. This information should be retained for record-keeping purposes.
Note: Best practice dictates that all amendments be acknowledged in writing by the owner.

WARNINGS AND BANS (T-43) (sections 26 and 48(3))

- 2.65 A building consent authority may not grant a building consent for building work that could result in a person breaching a ban imposed under section 26.
- 2.66 The building consent authority will maintain a current register of warnings and bans. Ideally, a building officer will be appointed to maintain this register and would access the Department’s website on a regular basis to ensure the building consent authority register remains current.
- 2.67 A building officer will be required to check the warning and ban register to ascertain whether proposed building products or methods included in the building consent application are affected by a warning or ban. If so, best practice dictates that records reflect the date the building consent authority becomes aware of a ban or warning, and the date that the ban or warning was issued or imposed.
- 2.68 If building work is affected by a warning or ban, the application will initially need to be suspended and the applicant contacted and advised to provide amended details that will achieve compliance.
- 2.69 When satisfied that compliance will be achieved, the building officer will advise the applicant that this component has been addressed and provide a list of any applicable building consent conditions or inspection requirements.
- 2.70 If compliance cannot be achieved, the building officer will refuse to issue the building consent or code compliance certificate, as applicable.

COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS (T-02 and T-40) (sections 22-25 and 405-413)

- 2.71 The Senior Consents Officer will need to ensure building consent applications that rely on Compliance Documents for demonstrating and achieving Building Code compliance are processed in accordance with the procedures set out in T-02 and T-40.
- 2.72 Care is needed to ensure the documents used are current and fit for purpose.

3 RECORD DECISIONS AND DOCUMENT PROCESSES

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- 3.1 On completion of all processing, the building approvals Coordinator will compile the building consent documentation, and determine whether compliance has been achieved.
- 3.2 The Senior Consents Officer will ensure an audit trail (checklists) is provided for each step of the processing operation.
- 3.3 If compliance has not been achieved, the approvals officer will refuse the building consent and advise the applicant of the reasons for refusal in writing.
- 3.4 Where the building consent authority has declined to issue a building consent, the applicant should be advised of the reasons for refusal.
- 3.5 Best practice also dictates that the building consent authority direct the applicant to the determination process should the applicant not be happy with the outcome, as a means of resolving a disputed decision (refer to T-37).

4 FORMALISE INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 After compiling the processing information, the building officer will determine the number of inspections required and assess whether there are any specific onsite inspection requirements.
- 4.2 Aspects needing consideration will include:
 - specialist inspections by technical experts
 - confirmation of producer statement conditions like ground-bearing conditions or site observation
 - whether any specialist equipment like cherry pickers are required.
- 4.3 Generally, the building officer will be responsible for ensuring that a consent-specific inspection process is implemented.

5 COLLATE DOCUMENTATION AND SET CONSENT CONDITIONS

- 5.1 After collating processing documentation and assessing inspection requirements, the building officer will determine if any building consent conditions are required. These will be formalised and the application will be forwarded to a senior officer for final checking.

6 FINAL CHECK

- 6.1 A final check will be undertaken to confirm that compliance has been achieved. Providing the building officer is satisfied that the building consent can be granted and the time clock stopped.
- 6.2 Ideally, the Senior Consents Officer will undertake a check to determine whether processing time-frames have been achieved. If not, the Senior Consents Officer will determine the reason why and instigate the appropriate measures to mitigate further failure to comply with statutory processing provisions.
- 6.3 The application will be then forwarded to administration staff to prepare the building consent for issue.

7 CALCULATE FEES

- 7.1 Administration staff will record processing time and calculate fees and levies (if applicable) and then return the application to the Senior Consents Officer for signing.
- 7.2 The applicant should then be advised that the building consent is ready for issue.

8 ERROR IN PROCESSING (T-42.2)

- 8.1 In the event that a building officer discovers an error has occurred during building consent processing and if this is identified after the building consent has been issued the Senior Consents Officer will need to be advised.
- 8.2 The Senior Consents Officer will then determine the appropriate action to be taken.

NOTES

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