



Department of
Building and Housing
Te Tari Kaupapa Whare

Guide to amending building work from the approved consent



Published in Dec 2007 by
Department of Building and Housing
PO Box 10-729
Wellington
New Zealand

This document is also available on the Department's website:
www.dbh.govt.nz

ISBN: 978-0-478-19478-4 (print)
ISBN: 978-0-478-19479-1 (website)

Foreword

The building consent is the foundation document for any building project. Once a building consent has been approved by a building consent authority (BCA), any changes to the proposed work may create repercussions for those involved with the building project. It is most important to tell your building consent authority if you are proposing an amendment – even if you think it is minor.

The change to the proposed building work may not comply with the Building Code, or may affect other aspects of the project. If you do not tell your BCA that you propose to vary the approved plans, you may find that the BCA refuses to issue a code compliance certificate, or that you have committed an offence which could carry heavy fines.

Under the Building Act 2004, BCAs are expected to improve their handling of amendments from consented building work. This aims to:

- provide greater assurance that the minimum acceptable standards of the Building Code have been met
- ensure building owners are not unfairly disadvantaged if a change to the Building Code occurs while a building project is underway
- provide a greater level of security to building owners and users, and to future owners, in the quality of their buildings
- ensure the consent documentation provides an accurate record of the building as built, which is important should any future work or repairs be needed, or if disputes arise.

BCAs have a duty to review all amendments from consented building work before they take place. The amendment may be as minor as proposing a style of tap different from that noted on the consent, or as major as using a different cladding system. The BCA will consider the amendment, decide whether it can be approved and, if so, will advise the applicant if further information or an amendment is required, or it will decide how to record the amendment on the consent records.

By offering this guidance, the Department of Building and Housing aims to help those involved in building projects to be aware of their responsibilities around amendments and to ensure that more building projects are right first time.

Contents

Foreword	1
About this document	4
Introduction	5
Why varying work from the building consent matters	
Local differences	
The dual role of councils	
About the building consent and inspection process	7
Building consents	
Regular inspections	
Code compliance certificate	
Notice to fix	
Minor and major amendments	9
Minor amendments	
Major amendments	
Who decides whether an amendment is major or minor?	
Product substitutions	11
Substitution does not relate to Building Code compliance	
Replacement has a different level of performance	
Substitution is complex	
Compliance with other legislation	12
Appliances, furnishings and fittings	13
Appliances	
Furnishings	
Fittings	
Varying approved building work in relation to appliances, furnishings and fittings	

Factory-manufactured elements and services plans	14
Factory-manufactured elements	
Services plans	
Assessing amendments	15
Who is responsible?	
Considering amendments	
Reasonable grounds	
Amending the building consent	15
Applying for an amendment	
What happens to minor amendments?	
What happens to major amendments?	
Key advice	17
For building consent applicants	
For builders	
For BCAs	
More help	19

About this document

This guide has been prepared for people involved in building projects. It relates particularly to proposed building work varying from that approved by the BCA in the consent documents.

It applies to all new building and renovation projects, particularly simple residential buildings. The principles it contains can be applied to all building types.

This guide has been written to help designers, builders, homeowner's agents and developers by explaining the responsibilities for amendments and indicating the types of things BCAs will be looking for.

This information may also be of interest to others in the construction sector, such as subcontractors. It is not intended as a guide for homeowner-applicants, because the process requires some knowledge of the Building Code and building process.

This document has been prepared by the Department of Building and Housing (the Department) as guidance information in accordance with section 175 of the Building Act 2004 (the Act).

This guide is not a substitute for professional advice, and should not be relied on as establishing compliance with the Building Code. It is not a Compliance Document under the Act and may be updated from time to time. The latest version is available from the Department's website (www.dbh.govt.nz).

Introduction

The owner of a proposed building, or alteration to an existing building, has a responsibility to ensure they build what they say they are going to build.

In the past, people have often approached a building project believing they could fill in the details during construction. Others find once a project is under way that they are unable to carry out some aspects of the construction as they had intended. This may be because assumptions made about the site turn out to be incorrect, or because a particular product is unavailable or costs are getting too high. Others simply change their minds during the project.

Building consent authorities (BCAs) are now being encouraged through the Building Act to improve their handling of amendments. On completion of a building project, the BCA will review the work and check it against the building consent before deciding whether or not to issue a code compliance certificate. This means there is more emphasis on any amendments than before.

Why amending work from the building consent matters

Non-compliance

If building work is varied from what is approved by the BCA on the consent, the main concern is that the amendment may not comply with the Building Code, or may affect the compliance of other elements of the building work. If it does not comply, then the minimum acceptable standards may not be met, which can lead to doubts around aspects such as fire safety, health, moisture control, stability, durability, services and facilities and energy efficiency.

Failure to obtain a code compliance certificate

At the final inspection, the BCA may refuse to issue a code compliance certificate (CCC) if the as-built construction doesn't match the work in the building consent. Without a CCC, the building owner may have trouble selling the property, or have difficulty getting finance and insurance.

An offence carrying fines

A BCA may issue a notice to fix if work has been carried out that is not on the approved consent. This could require remedial work to take place, or for the building or work to be removed. If the notice to fix is not complied with, the BCA has the option to prosecute, which could result in an initial fine of up to \$200,000, plus ongoing fines for every day that the offence continues.

Inaccurate documentation

As well as showing how a proposed building work intends to comply with the Building Code and providing construction information, the consent document is also intended to provide an accurate record of the building work that is carried out. This is important for the building owner, and any future owners, if further building work or repairs are necessary, or if disputes arise.

Local differences

The basic principles for those wishing to vary the building work from the approved consent will be similar across New Zealand. However, each BCA has developed its own processes for how it manages building consents and inspections, which may mean differences between different areas.

This allows for differences to be managed locally, such as ways of storing and retrieving volumes of applications, or managing inspections across wide geographical areas.

The dual role of councils

In a building project, a council may act both as a BCA, carrying out consenting and inspections on building work, and also as a territorial authority.

As a BCA, the council's processes around consents and inspections are monitored and must meet accreditation and registration requirements. The Building Act allows for other organisations to become building consent authorities, but for the purpose of this document, we refer to councils.

As a territorial authority the council is responsible for local by-laws (for example covering kerbs, trees or driveways, etc) and has responsibilities around other Acts affecting building work, including the Resource Management Act 1991, the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 and the Local Government Act 2002.

This guide refers to the council's role as either a BCA or as a territorial authority to explain certain approaches around varying work from the approved consent.

About the building consent and inspection process

This section gives more detail about the building consent and inspection process to help explain how varying your plans can affect the outcome of your project.

Consents are issued and inspections take place to ensure that building work is constructed to New Zealand's minimum acceptable standards. It provides assurance to current and future owners and users of a building that the building work has been assessed by a BCA as meeting the requirements of the Building Code.

Consents

Work cannot begin until the BCA has all the information it requires, has approved the proposed application and issued a building consent.

For the building consent to be approved, you need to demonstrate how the proposed building, or building work, will comply with the Building Code. It helps to remember that the Building Code sets out only the minimum performance standards a building must meet. In many cases, homeowners and designers will strive for better standards.

It's also important to remember that BCAs are looking for compliance with the Building Code. Their role is not to design the work nor monitor the quality of workmanship or aesthetics, except where this affects compliance with the Building Code.

Documentation for even a simple new building project passes through many hands, including designers, builders, plumbers, drainlayers, homeowners and developers, as well as the BCA.

Good planning and documentation provides a solid foundation for everyone involved in the process. However, ensuring that the documentation submitted for building consent is appropriate for demonstrating compliance with the Building Code is important. For example, ensuring the documents submitted do not contain unnecessary information – such as details of furniture, fittings and appliances except where relevant to Code compliance – can speed up processing and approval times, and may mean minor amendments to the approved consent can later be avoided.

The plans must be thoroughly considered and discussed with the owner before an application is made – this can result in fewer amendments and help avoid delays and costs during the building project.

Factory-manufactured building elements, such as roof trusses and flooring systems, and services plans need careful consideration at the building consent stage. Both can require updates to be provided to the approved consent documentation during construction.

For help in completing a building consent application form and preparing its accompanying documentation (for example, plans and specifications), see also the Department's publication *Guide to applying for a building consent – simple residential buildings*. This is free to download from www.dbh.govt.nz

Regular inspections

Once a project is underway, the BCA makes regular inspections, and issues an inspection schedule with the building consent. At each stage of work noted in the inspection schedule, the building owner is responsible for informing the BCA. It is important to be clear if this task has been delegated to the building owner's agent, designer or builder.

Your BCA will have a process to deal with any unconsented work (work that has already been carried out that varies from the building consent) it finds during its regular inspections. This may include issuing a notice to fix requiring remedial work, or the removal of work.

Code compliance certificate

Once the BCA has made its final inspection, it decides whether or not to issue a code compliance certificate (CCC), if the work complies with the building consent.

This is covered by section 94¹ of the Act. A BCA must issue a CCC if it is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the building work complies with the consent, which shows how the building proposes to comply with the Building Code. By relating the CCC to the *consent*, this section of the Act prevents applicants from being unfairly disadvantaged if a change to the Building Code occurs while a building project is under way.

The BCA can therefore refuse to issue a CCC for work that differs from the building consent (in relation to Code compliance).

Notice to fix

If an owner or someone involved in the building project is issued with a notice to fix, this will provide details of why a CCC cannot be issued and give a timeframe for any problems relating to compliance to be resolved.

¹ Matters for consideration by building consent authority in deciding issue of code compliance certificate.

Minor and major amendments

BCAs have a duty to review all amendments to consented building work before they take place.

The amendment may be as minor as proposing a style of tap different from that noted on the consent, or as major as using a different cladding system. The BCA will consider the amendment, decide whether it can be approved and, if so, will advise the applicant if further information or an amendment is required, or it will decide how to record the amendment on the consent records.

The Building Act does not talk about ‘amendments’ specifically, but section 45 allows any amendments to a building consent to be made as if they were an application for a building consent.

An application for an amendment to a building consent must be made as if it were an application for a building consent, and this section applies with any necessary modifications.

The wording ‘and this section applies with any necessary modifications’ is significant. This allows BCAs some discretion when they consider the processes they apply. This is discussed further in this section.

Minor amendments

The golden rule is BCAs must be told before the work takes place.

Many amendments during building work are likely to be minor. If the amendments are so minor they do not affect compliance with the Building Code, a BCA is unlikely to require the application process to be restarted. However, a BCA must still be notified, preferably in writing, about any proposed amendment so it can confirm the change is minor and advise how they will record it.

Each individual building project brings its own compliance issues and a BCA may see a minor amendment differently from the designer, those working on the project or the applicant.

Details such as the placement of kitchen cupboards or the use of a particular type of tap, for example, do not normally affect compliance with the Building Code, but may do so if the cupboards are to be positioned in a way that could create a fire hazard, or if the taps are for accessible facilities.

In simple cases, the BCA may wish only to record the change with a note to the consent records. Some BCAs may require this to be countersigned by the applicant.

In this way the consent documentation will continue to reflect the as-built building.

Major amendments

Sometimes it is more obvious when compliance with the Building Code will be affected. Some examples are given below.

- A deck shown on the building consent drawings is no longer to be built.
- The applicant wants an ensuite bathroom to be installed instead of a wardrobe shown on the building consent drawings.
- Timber joists complying with NZS 3604 are shown on the building consent drawings, but the applicant is advised by the builder to change to a manufactured proprietary joist system.
- The applicant wants to change the proposed cladding system from that approved.
- A new house is approved for a perimeter foundation wall and ordinary internal piles, but it is decided instead to construct a complete timber pile foundation.
- The applicant wants to install a skylight while making other renovations.

As with minor amendments, the BCA must be told in advance of any proposed amendments to the building work from that approved in the consent.

For major amendments, as in the above examples, the BCA is likely to require the applicant to go through a formal amendment process, using a form it supplies.

In most cases the applicant will need to supply specific information, calculations, schematics or drawings detailing and justifying the proposed amendment.

In some cases the amendment may be so significant the BCA may require a new consent for the proposed work.

If approved, the amended application (or new consent) becomes part of the approved building consent documents. The BCA will stamp its copies as superseded and supplemented by the amended copies.

Who decides whether an amendment is major or minor?

The BCA has sole responsibility to decide whether a proposed amendment can be approved and whether it is a major or minor amendment.

The applicant needs to demonstrate how the proposed amendment complies with the Building Code, and the BCA provides an independent technical check.

Designers and builders *should* have the technical knowledge to determine how an amendment may affect Building Code compliance, but this cannot be relied on and ultimately only the BCA can give approval.

Product substitutions

Product substitutions can have a minor or major impact on building work, so each case needs careful consideration. There are three main scenarios.

- The substitution does not relate to compliance with the Building Code.
- The replacement product has a different level of performance.
- The substitution is complex and the impact of compliance with the Building Code needs to be assessed.

Substitution does not relate to Building Code compliance

Applicants sometimes do not distinguish between work covered by the building consent process and other work, such as the installation of certain appliances, furnishings and fittings that do not relate to the Building Code.

Ideally, details such as the installation of certain appliances, furnishings and fittings should not be included in the building consent documentation if they are not needed to demonstrate compliance with the Building Code.

However, once such details form part of the approved plans, they should not be varied without consultation with the BCA – in case the alternative does jeopardise compliance with the Building Code.

Replacement product has a different level of performance

Sometime products are not available, or the amendment involves a change to a product or method that still complies with the Building Code, but provides a different level of performance than on the consented plans.

For example, R2.4 insulation is specified for use in the walls. The owner wants to use R1.8 instead. Both types meet the performance requirements of the Building Code, but R1.8 insulation provides a lower level of performance.

In a case like this, the BCA will have a good understanding of the impact of the proposed change on the performance requirements of the Building Code, and will advise the applicant of what needs to occur.

The BCA must still be asked to approve the amendment before it takes place. The applicant could be asked to provide evidence to show that the amendment will comply with the Building Code. If the BCA decides to approve the amendment, it will have a process in place to do so, such as noting the change on the consent records; some BCAs may ask the applicant to countersign this.

The paper record is important. It ensures the inspectors know exactly what work has been approved, so they can consider this when undertaking inspections and deciding whether to issue the code compliance certificate once the work has finished.

Substitution is complex

In some cases, products appear to be very similar, yet do not achieve the same levels of performance and the impact on compliance with the Building Code needs to be assessed. In deciding whether to approve a product substitution, the BCA will need to consider if:

- the product achieves an equivalent level of durability, strength and so on
- the product has been tested
- the technical literature is from a reliable source
- there are any special conditions for use
- the product has an impact on other building elements.

It is the applicant's responsibility to justify the proposed substitution in these terms. The BCA's role is to consider this and decide if it is satisfied that the alternative complies with the Building Code.

The BCA will inform the applicant how the proposed amendment is best considered and, if approved, how it is recorded. It is likely this type of substitution will require an amendment to the building consent, using the form supplied by the BCA.

Compliance with other legislation

The documents submitted with a building consent sometimes contain information that does not relate to Building Code compliance, but is still relevant to the BCA. Details in the specifications and plans may, for example, be included to show compliance with:

- the District Plan (a Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) issue)
- other Acts (such as Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987)
- council by-laws.

The plans may show how the proposed building would conform to District Plan restrictions or sunlight access planes and site coverage, or how it would comply with bylaws relating to earthworks, driveways or kerb crossings.

This is not usually a problem, because it is obvious to any BCA building official that such information is unrelated to Building Code requirements. However, it is worth noting that if this information is changed, then so too would the corresponding building details contained in the plans and specifications.

This guidance document relates to amendments that are proposed to the approved building work in relation to the Building Code, as that is how the building consent and inspection process is ring-fenced in legislation. A council officer who attends to RMA and other Act or by-law issues on a building site does so using delegations under the Local Government Act 2002. These activities are unrelated to the Building Act.

However, before going ahead with a change that could breach the RMA, or other Acts and by-laws, an applicant should seek approval from their council, as a resource consent may be needed. In any case, the council should make the decision on how to proceed.

For example, a property owner wants to make a small increase to the size of a deck that already has building consent approval. The deck is on the side of the building and any movement toward the boundary could potentially breach the 'deck in side yard' rule in the District Plan. If the owner was to go ahead with the extension, they run the risk of contravening the District Plan, and breaching the RMA. The council has a duty of care and could decide to issue an abatement notice (under the RMA), which could carry heavy penalties.

Appliances, furnishings and fittings

Documents submitted with a building consent application may include instructions to the builder or practitioners about customer preferences for certain appliances, furnishings and fittings. These features do not always relate to the Building Code, but it can be difficult to determine.

Appliances

Plans may detail the location of certain appliances such as a dishwasher or electric heater. In most cases these do not relate to compliance with the Building Code, but there are some exceptions. The appliance could be a solid fuel burner, in which case Clause C1 is relevant. Or it could be a sanitary appliance, to which G clauses apply.

Furnishings

The building consent documentation may include details about certain furnishings, such as curtains, floor coverings, wallpaper and paint.

Most furnishings do not relate to the Building Code, but there are some exceptions. Food preparation areas have special requirements. Furnishings can affect fire load and have an affect on the building's fire design.

Fittings

Building plans often show fittings (built in features such as internal doors, wardrobes, laundry cupboards and other storage spaces for example).

Fittings can be very important. At the very least the structure of the building has to be able to withstand imposed loads, so they should not be added or repositioned without careful consideration.

Certain fittings are also necessary to achieve compliance with the Building Code. For example, areas containing a sanitary fixture (such as a toilet) must be fitted with an internal door to provide privacy. Kitchens must have certain kinds of workbenches and cupboards to meet the requirements in the Building Code around food preparation and prevention of contamination. In some situations, fittings are required to provide the ability for people with disabilities to be able to use them.

Varying approved building work in relation to appliances, furnishings and fittings

A building consent is granted on the basis of the information in the application that relates to the Building Code. Other information does not form part of the approval process for the building consent. However, this does not mean people can change appliances, furnishings and fittings mid-way through a project without some level of prior approval as some of these features *do* relate to the Building Code, and therefore must be approved by the BCA before they can be changed.

In general, it is best not to include information in the building consent application about appliances, furnishing and fittings except where they relate to compliance with the Building Code.

Factory-manufactured elements and services plans

Factory-manufactured elements

Before the Building Act 2004, BCAs were often prepared to issue a building consent based on outline information for proposed factory-manufactured building elements. Now there is more emphasis on including complete 'for construction' documentation in the application for building consent.

Before lodging a building consent application, applicants should obtain a buildable design from a fabricator. This design needs to be attached to the building consent application and submitted to the BCA for approval. During construction, the fabricator is likely to visit the site to check all relevant measurements in order to manufacture the trusses or flooring system. The fabricator will produce 'shop drawings', which are highly detailed drawings for the person who makes the trusses or flooring system. They will also produce a series of on-site instructions, and a layout plan for the person who erects the building elements.

Once the installation has been completed, the as-built information should be supplied to the builder, designer, building owner and BCA for their records. The BCA may place a note to this effect on the building consent records.

Services plans

The Building Code requires that sanitary fixtures and sanitary appliances are provided with a safe and adequate water supply, and an adequate plumbing and drainage system.

At the time of the building consent application, the BCA will require certain information on the water supply system and the foul water and surface water (stormwater) disposal systems. Precisely how a water supply, or a waste or foul water disposal system, is to be laid out may not be apparent when the applicant applies for a building consent. However, the applicant should provide the location and specification of all fixtures and fittings, together with a diagrammatic layout of foul and surface water drainage. When the project is finished, the BCA will ask for an as-built drainage plan for its records.

Assessing amendments

Who is responsible?

Everyone involved in a building project has a part to play in making sure amendments are handled properly.

Builders and project managers should ensure that the property owner is aware of any proposed amendments. This is not an obligation under the Building Act, but is still good practice, particularly as the property owner is ultimately responsible for the building work and for obtaining the code compliance certificate.

Everyone involved in the project should ensure the BCA is informed before any work begins – the BCA has a duty to consider all amendments. The BCA needs to give its approval, and decide whether an amendment is necessary or how to record the change, before the work proceeds.

Designers, architects, builders, project managers and property owners should work together to provide any information the BCA asks for to justify how the proposed amendments would comply with the Building Code.

BCAs should allow time to deal with enquiries about amendments, and have processes in place to manage amendments quickly and efficiently.

Considering an amendment

When a BCA is deciding how to deal with a proposed amendment, it considers the building's performance using the same criteria for establishing the original building consent – it establishes compliance with the Building Code on reasonable grounds based on the information it has received from the applicant.

The situation is no different for product substitutions. Responsibility falls on the applicant to show that the proposed substitute (and how it relates to other building work) will meet the performance requirements of the Building Code.

In proposing an amendment, the applicant may need to restart the consent process, or to complete an amendment using the form supplied by the BCA and provide any other information the BCA requires. However, the BCA may need a sufficiently detailed description to add to the consent records in order to retain an accurate record of what is built.

Reasonable grounds

For the BCA to assess proposed amendments, the applicant must give the BCA ‘reasonable grounds’ on which to consider it. If the application is major, or if the BCA requires further information, the applicant may want to provide one or more of the following:

- reference to relevant Compliance Documents
- reference to relevant Standards
- expert opinions
- in-service history
- results of laboratory or field tests
- relevant extracts from manufacturers’ technical literature.

Amending the building consent

In the first instance, the applicant should contact the BCA to discuss the proposed amendment – whether it is minor or major, and what action will follow.

If the BCA considers it is necessary (usually if the amendment affects Building Code compliance, and particularly if it is major), it may require an amendment to be made to the building consent using the forms it supplies. The BCA will advise the applicant.

Applying for an amendment

Each BCA provides its own form for applications for an amendment to the building consent. These are available from the BCA.

The forms are based on *Form 2 Application for project information memorandum, and/or building consent*, the content of which is set out in law in Part 2 of the Schedule to the Building (Forms) Regulations 2004.

Supporting information is often required to accompany the form to provide sufficient detail on the amendment to show how the proposal will comply with the Building Code. When preparing these accompanying documents, applicants should make clear reference to what is changing from the approved consent. For example, reference the section, page or clause in the specification or drawing detail number in the documents previously submitted. It can be useful to highlight the change of drawing by marking this clearly on the documentation (using shading, thicker lines or different colours) to make the change obvious.

BCA must process all amendments to building consents within 20 working days. This processing timeframe will stop if the applicant has not included enough information to demonstrate compliance with the Building Code.

Key advice

For building consent applicants

- As far as possible, finalise the details of what you want to build before applying for a building consent. If you change your mind after the building consent has been approved, it can result in administrative costs and delays.
- Factor amendments into your contingency planning – particularly if you are considering an alteration or renovation. It is often difficult at the planning stage to predict all the factors about an existing building that will affect the new building work.
- Consider applying for a project information memorandum before applying for a building consent. This can give you information about the site which might influence your planning.
- When preparing your application for a building consent, present information on the plans and specifications that relates to compliance with the Building Code in a way that is clear and easy for the BCA to follow. Avoid, or separate out, details that do not relate to compliance with the Building Code.
- Discuss the project with your builder before submitting the application for a building consent. For example, the builder may prefer to work with factory-manufactured trusses rather than constructing them as the designer has detailed in the consent documents.
- The building consent application, and any subsequent amendments that may be necessary, must contain sufficient detail to give the BCA ‘reasonable grounds’ on which to make its decision. The designer (and/or builder) may be able to help with demonstrating this.
- If the BCA asks you to make an amendment to the building consent using its application form, submit your application as soon as possible to avoid delaying the building work. Work cannot start, or continue, until the BCA has made its decision on the application.
- Even if you don’t need to submit an amendment application, you will still need to provide all the information the BCA asks for.

For builders

- Build from the plans and specifications. Refer to them frequently throughout the project.
- If you are thinking about varying the building work in any way from the approved plans, advise the owner and/or project manager first. Ultimately the owner is responsible for the building work and for obtaining a code compliance certificate.
- Do not carry out the building work until the amendment has been discussed with the BCA. Know whose role it is to contact the BCA and remind them.
- Obtain a written record of any amendment agreement by the BCA.
- Give as much notice as possible to limit delays to the building work.
- Involve the designer in the process of considering an amendment to ensure that the amendment does not impact on other parts of the building work.
- Explain why the proposed amendment is necessary, and be prepared to offer your view on how it complies with the Building Code (the designer may have primary responsibility for this). It will help support any request for an amendment.

For BCAs

- Provide general information to the public/applicants with advice about amendments from approved building work.
- BCAs should have processes in place for handling amendments and applications.
- Remind applicants about the need to obtain prior approval if they want to vary building work after a consent is issued (or while it is being processed).
- Be prepared to take calls from people asking for advice. Let them know what information they need to provide to justify their proposals.
- If a proposed amendment requires an application for amendment to the building consent, tell the applicant the appropriate form and information required.
- Simple amendments may be approved in a more informal manner, according to agreed BCA process. It is important to record a note of the amendment on the consent records, as a way of showing you have been consulted and given your approval.
- If the applicant submits details, sketches or specifications, attach these to the approved plans and stamp or mark old plans etc, as superseded. (Some BCAs may require an applicant to countersign).
- Assess the applicant's arguments about how a proposed amendment meets the performance requirements of the Building Code using the same criteria you would normally use to establish 'reasonable grounds' under section 49 of the Building Act 2004.
- Remember that requirements under the District Plan, local bylaws or other regulations are not matters to be considered under the building consent process. However, you may want to advise applicants of their other obligations.
- Applications should be processed within 20 working days, as with a standard building consent application.
- Consider whether proposed amendments from the approved building consent will affect inspections, and revise the inspection schedule if necessary.

More help

More information on publications available can be found on the Department of Building and Housing website.

Contact the Department of Building and Housing on:

Freephone: 0800 242 243

Website: www.dbh.govt.nz