



# codewords

## Hollowcore report released

Please note that this information on Hollowcore has been amended  
as at 12 July 2010

This article announced the release of the Hollowcore Floor Overview  
Report on investigations into the use of hollowcore floors in New  
Zealand, and their likely performance when subject to shaking from a  
strong earthquake.

The article recommended that owners who may have concerns  
should employ a suitably qualified structural engineer to review the  
building and hollow core details. That advice remains. However, in  
light of more recent knowledge the Department has decided to  
remove the Hollowcore report from the website. More updated  
information is provided in Codewords 24, Practice Advisory 5, the  
draft version of 'Seismic Performance of Hollow Core Floor Systems,  
Guidelines for Design Assessment and Retrofit' and the paper by  
Fenwick and Bull published in SESOC Journal Volume 23 No 1,  
April 2010.

Research into the earthquake behaviour of hollow-core floors is  
ongoing, as are efforts to produce guidelines for design assessment  
and retrofit. The Department recommends that designers keep  
themselves informed of developments.

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# New producer statement forms

The Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ), the Association of Consulting Engineers New Zealand (ACENZ) and New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) recently issued three producer statement forms for use by their members. The forms relate to design, design review and construction monitoring.

The forms are:

- PS1 – Design
- PS2 – Design Review
- PS4 – Construction Review

Copies are available from: [www.acenz.org.nz](http://www.acenz.org.nz), [www.ipenz.org.nz](http://www.ipenz.org.nz) and [www.nzia.co.nz](http://www.nzia.co.nz)

The Department believes producer statements can play an important part in the building consent and code compliance certificate process. There is value in having a signed statement about compliance from the professionals involved in design and/or construction.

However, producer statements must be used with discretion to be of value. Receiving a producer statement does not relieve a building consent authority of its obligations to satisfy itself on reasonable grounds that a design, when built, will comply with the Building Code, or that construction has followed the building consent(s). It is for the building consent authority to decide on the extent to which they rely on producer statements, according to the circumstances in each case. The complexity of the building and the competence of the designer or certifier are important considerations.

Building consent authorities may have their own producer statement forms, but we encourage them to promote the use of the IPENZ/ACENZ/NZIA documents for design, design review and construction review, because:

- co-branding of the forms by IPENZ, ACENZ and NZIA shows wide approval among designers
- the wording of the forms has been reviewed by the Department and BOINZ
- each form provides a building consent authority with a signed statement by a representative of the design firm (professional engineering or architectural) on the compliance of the design with the Building Code or the compliance of the construction with relevant building consent(s)
- the forms cover relevant topics in a way that should be acceptable to both designers and building officials
- signatories are required to indicate if they are Chartered Professional Engineers, Registered Architects, members of IPENZ or members of NZIA
- the adoption of these forms will promote consistency across the country.

The Department encourages building consent authorities to consider construction monitoring, preferably by the designer, and the submission of a construction review producer statement (PS4), as important steps in helping them decide if the building work complies with the building consent.

# Better energy efficiency in homes and offices

The Minister for Building and Construction, Hon Clayton Cosgrove, recently announced several initiatives to improve the energy efficiency of New Zealand homes and workplaces. Changes to the Building Code and Compliance Documents will:

- require better insulation in new homes, including window double glazing
- make it easier and effectively cheaper to install solar water heating systems
- improve lighting efficiency in new commercial buildings.

The Minister also announced public consultation on two further proposals to:

- require domestic hot water systems in new homes to be more energy efficient
- make heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems in new commercial buildings more energy efficient.

## THE FIRST PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Consultation on the first three proposals closed on 22 December 2006. We are grateful to everyone who submitted feedback.

We received 100 submissions from the industry, individuals and government agencies. The submissions expressed wide-ranging views, but the overwhelming majority supported the energy efficiency proposals in principle.

More information on the December 2006 consultation can be found on the Department's website ([www.dbh.govt.nz/energy-efficiency](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/energy-efficiency)).

## THE LATEST PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation on proposals relating to hot water and HVAC systems is now open. We welcome your feedback. If adopted, these proposals will have major implications on the design of New Zealand buildings.

The proposed changes will lower power and gas bills, reduce the environmental impact of energy use in homes and workplaces, and help conserve water. They are part of the Government's plan to improve energy efficiency and combat the effects of climate change.

The first proposal is for new homes to have more energy-efficient hot water systems. This will lower energy bills and save homeowners money. Options could include using a water-efficient shower head or installing a solar water heating system. These choices could be 'traded off' against an overall energy efficiency target, to find the most suitable and economic solution for each home.

A unique part of the hot water proposal is using projected carbon dioxide emissions to compare the efficiency and environmental impact of different systems. This will be

the first time that carbon dioxide has appeared as a performance measure in the Building Code or Compliance Documents.

The second proposal is to improve the energy performance of HVAC systems in new commercial buildings. These changes will ensure HVAC systems are designed to be energy efficient, easily maintainable, and their energy consumption can be continually monitored.

Owners and tenants of commercial buildings may make substantial savings on running costs. In addition to the financial incentive, efficient and well-maintained HVAC systems improve the indoor environment of commercial buildings.

A copy of the discussion document and advice on how to submit feedback is available at the Department's website ([www.dbh.govt.nz/energy-efficiency](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/energy-efficiency)).

A paper copy can be ordered by calling 0800 242 243. Submissions close on 29 June 2007.



# Health and safety procedures for LOSP and other treated timbers



The chemicals used in timber preservatives have varying levels of toxicity, so it is vital to take suitable health and safety precautions when handling and working with any freshly treated timber and when disposing of such waste.

LOSP (light organic solvent-based preservative) treatments were introduced in the 1990s to treat timber in its finished form after machining and drying. Water-based treatments cause finished timbers to swell and distort, whereas LOSP treatments, using an organic solvent base (as the vehicle for treatment chemicals), do not affect dry, finished timber.

The organic solvents in LOSP-treated timber will evaporate after exposure to air (the time it takes to evaporate is temperature-dependent), but some people may experience health problems, such as skin rashes, eye irritations, headaches or light-headedness when working with this timber. These problems are more likely to occur when the timber has not had enough time for the solvents to evaporate or 'flash-off'.

## 'FLASHING OFF' AND STORAGE OF LOSP-TREATED TIMBER

The Timber Preservation Council states that, before despatch from the treatment site, 'LOSP-treated timber shall be held in fillet (every layer) for a minimum of four days in a well-ventilated area. Alternative methods may be used to reduce residual solvent to equivalent levels'. (See *Information resources* below.)

This procedure allows solvents time to 'flash off' before the timber leaves the treatment plant. Ideally, it should be stored without protective wrappings in an area with double-ventilated openings or an air extraction system. Other methods may be acceptable to achieve the same level of 'flash-off'.

If timber is delivered before adequate 'flash off' has been achieved, timber treaters should advise recipients/buyers of the date of treatment and the time needed for the timber to 'flash-off' before use. The season and weather will affect the required period.

All recipients of LOSP-treated timber, such as merchants and pre-nailers, should allow any residual solvent vapours to dissipate from the timber received by placing it in a well-ventilated, covered space with the protective wrap removed.

## PRECAUTIONS WHEN USING LOSP-TREATED TIMBER

- Do not use LOSP-treated timber that has not been adequately 'flushed-off'.
- Avoid working with fresh LOSP-treated timber in an unventilated and confined space.
- Wear gloves and long sleeves for protection against splinters and cuts during handling.

- Where there is prolonged contact with timber that has not 'flushed-off' (such as in treatment plants), use an impervious work apron, long sleeves, solvent-resistant gloves, goggles and a filter mask with the proper cartridge.
- Apply a chemical resistant barrier cream to exposed areas of skin, such as wrists and forearms.

### PRECAUTIONS WHEN USING ANY TREATED TIMBER

Users of any treated timber, regardless of the treatment type, should take certain health and safety precautions.

- When power sawing or machining any timber (treated or not), wear goggles to protect eyes from flying particles and a mask to prevent dust inhalation.
- If sawdust from treated timber gathers on clothes, wash them before reuse. Wash work clothes separately from other laundry.
- After working with treated timber, avoid rubbing eyes or touching the mouth, and wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Do not burn treated timber off-cuts and sawdust (such as for heating and barbecues).
- Consult the local council about the proper way to dispose of treated timber waste.

### CAUTION


Do not use treated timber for:


- toys
- items in contact with food or drinking water
- wood shavings for animal litter or mulch.

If you experience health problems while using treated timber, review your health and safety precautions. If health problems persist, seek medical advice.

### INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Timber Preservation Council  
[www.nztpc.co.nz](http://www.nztpc.co.nz)

The Department of Labour  
 [www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/pdf/timber-preservatives-guide.pdf](http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/pdf/timber-preservatives-guide.pdf)

AgriQuality Limited  
 [www.agriquality.com/auditing\\_and\\_inspection/forestry/export\\_certification.cfm](http://www.agriquality.com/auditing_and_inspection/forestry/export_certification.cfm)

## Builders' and designers' presentations

Over the next few months we are presenting information on the Licensed Building Practitioners Scheme to builders and designers.

These free presentations follow the style of the highly successful Builders' Breakfasts of 2006. They're hosted by hardware chains, usually early in the day, and breakfast is provided. Several Department representatives will be present to give information and answer questions.

Details of presentation dates, venues etc. are available at <http://www.dbh.govt.nz/licensing-builders-breakfasts>



# Building consent authority accreditation

The Department and accrediting agency International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) are encouraging city, district and regional councils to apply for accreditation as building consent authorities as soon as possible.

The initial accreditation assessment will enable councils to learn from IANZ how they need to improve policies, systems, procedures and resources, so as to achieve accreditation by 30 November 2007.

Some councils may be doing more than they need to achieve accreditation this year, such as working on quality assurance systems that are not required until 2010. This is highly commendable for councils that can achieve these goals without jeopardising their ability to meet the 2007 requirements. However, councils with limited capacity and capability are advised to focus on achieving the November 2007 requirements.

The Department is working with councils to find out ways it can help them become accredited, including access to a \$3 million accreditation assistance package. The Department encourages councils to share knowledge and resources with each other.

## PILOT ASSESSMENTS CARRIED OUT

Earlier this year, the Department and IANZ ran pilot accreditation assessments with six councils in the South Island and Wellington cluster groups. Even though the standards and criteria regulations were still in draft form when the pilot started, we felt it would be valuable to assess councils against these draft regulations so we could learn from the assessments.

The pilots were an opportunity to find out what support councils needed, test their application of accreditation standards and criteria, trial and fine-tune assessment processes, train technical experts in assessment techniques, and agree on the technical interpretations of the standards and criteria regulations.

Participating councils were advised that the pilot assessments were not a substitute for undergoing full assessment for accreditation (later in 2007) by IANZ.

After the pilot assessments were completed, the Department published the findings and sent copies to all councils and other interest groups. This publication is available from our Contact Centre (phone 0800 242 243) and our website ([www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)).

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE PILOT ASSESSMENTS

- There were mixed reactions – positive and negative – to assessment requirements, particularly about identifying issues that require attention.
- Requirements for policies, systems and procedures were not always well understood.
- The procedural detail that is required could be better explained, especially the main elements of each core process, and evidence that procedures are being followed consistently by all staff.
- Cluster group processes need to be used as a starting point for individual councils.
- Some councils are working too far ahead. For example, some are developing quality assurance systems not required until 2010, when they should be working on systems to meet the 2007 requirements.

As well as publishing and distributing the results of our pilot assessment, we are talking directly with councils, via assistance package case advisors, about the issues identified in the pilot study.

# ion update

## CONSULTATION PAPER ISSUED

Consultation has now closed on proposed standards and criteria for the registration of building consent authorities.

The Minister for Building and Construction, Hon. Clayton Cosgrove, described the release of this consultation paper – *Building Consent Authority Registration Standards and Criteria Proposals* – as ‘another step forward in the reform of the building sector’, and urged councils and other interest groups to comment.

Regulations will be developed this year after submissions have been analysed and policy proposals have been amended and approved.

Private organisations wanting to provide building control services may also seek accreditation and registration. Standards and criteria for their registration will be the same as those for local authorities, though more information will be required from private organisations to determine their suitability as building consent authorities.

Later this year, the Department is planning to release a consultation paper on the Building Act’s requirements for private building consent authorities to show they have adequate means to meet any civil liabilities arising from their building controls work.

## REGISTRATION FEES

The average cost of processing a registration application for a council is estimated at around \$250 (ex GST) which adds up to \$21,000 for all 85 councils. The Department will absorb this cost, rather than pass it on to councils via a registration fee. The registration standards and criteria consultation paper proposes that private organisations pay a fee of \$5,570 (ex GST) to cover the significant costs of checking their compliance with registration requirements.

This cost arises largely from additional consumer protection requirements for private organisations (imposed by the Building Act 2004) relating to ‘adequate means’ in terms of meeting civil liabilities that may arise from their building control functions. Assessment of adequate means involves very detailed consideration of financial risks and will likely require input from a range of specialist advisors.

## ACCREDITATION FEE REGULATIONS IN PLACE

Regulations have been made to set the fees payable for the accreditation of territorial and regional authorities and other organisations as building consent authorities.

The Building (Consent Authority Accreditation Fees) Regulations 2007 enable the building consent accreditation body (IANZ) to recover costs it incurs in assessing each applicant against accreditation standards and criteria.

Accreditation fees for initial applications range from \$16,000 to \$63,495 (including GST). Fees for territorial authorities are based on the average annual value of building work consented to by each authority in the last three financial years. There are eight fee categories. The following examples show the range of initial accreditation fees payable by councils.

- A smaller council, with an annual value of (consented) building work of less than \$15 million, would pay the lowest fee of \$16,000.
- A medium-size council, with an annual value of (consented) building work between \$100 million and \$200 million, would pay \$36,355.
- A council with an annual value of (consented) building work of more than \$1.2 billion, would pay the highest fee of \$63,495.

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One-off buildings with a value more than all other buildings consented in a year are excluded from the calculation of what councils will pay, as are buildings with a value less than \$5,000. Regional authorities, whose only responsibility under the accreditation system is to process building consents for dams, will pay an initial accreditation fee of \$16,000.

Each building consent authority can decide whether it wishes to recover the cost of accreditation by increasing building consent fees.

Private organisations that become building consent authorities will be charged a first-year fee of \$16,000. After the first year they will pay audit fees based on the actual value of consented building work, the same as for territorial authorities.

## **ASSISTANCE FUNDING**

The first three rounds of funding allocations have been made from the Government's \$3 million accreditation assistance package to help territorial and regional authorities prepare for accreditation.

A total of about 60 applications have been approved, for funding of more than \$1.1 million.

Applications covered a variety of projects. This included guidance on process documents required for accreditation, training staff in implementing new systems, education surrounding options for transferring building consent authority functions to meet Building Act obligations, and competency assessment services from external suppliers. All applicants volunteered to share their project reports as a form of national guidance. A resource kit where councils can share project information has been established on the Local Government New Zealand website <http://www.lgnz.co.nz/projects/building-consent/AccreditationResourceKit.html>

Case advisors have been working with building consent authorities since late February 2007 to see what, if any, help they need to prepare for accreditation.

Sector feedback on assistance package activities has been positive. Access to Department officials alongside IANZ assessors was considered particularly useful. Nationwide workshops explaining requirements have also been positively received. A second series of workshops has been organised to focus on identified needs in the six local government zones.

# IANZ **assess**

The assessment for building consent authority accreditation isn't a pass/fail scenario. Rather, it's about identifying any gaps in systems, procedures, resources or competencies, so that councils can address these issues and achieve accreditation.

# ment process

According to Geoff Hallam, IANZ Programme Manager – Inspection Bodies Accreditation, the aim of accreditation is to ensure that:

- documented systems are technically valid
- systems are effectively implemented
- personnel are technically competent
- results are consistently reliable.

‘It’s not about certifying personnel, reprocessing consents or re-inspecting buildings,’ he says. ‘Nor does it tell building control staff how to do their job, guarantee that every job is carried out perfectly or prevent all mistakes. Basically, it’s a means of checking that credible systems are in place for building control staff to do their job properly, to the benefit of their customers and the building sector.’

## ABOUT IANZ

IANZ is a Crown entity established by Act of Parliament in 1972 as a non-profit organisation operating on a user-pays basis to support New Zealand business and exports. Accreditation provides formal recognition that an organisation is competent to carry out specific tasks.

On-site assessments involve gathering information and checking that proper records are kept and procedures are undertaken effectively. The process IANZ uses to identify gaps in the applicant’s records, procedures and systems is a Corrective Action Request (CAR). Each CAR details a gap and explains what actions need to be taken to show that it has been filled.

## PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION AS A BUILDING CONSENT AUTHORITY

There are several steps to accreditation. Each needs to be achieved to IANZ’s satisfaction before the next step can be taken.

### Step 1 Application

The organisation submits its application to IANZ for accreditation as a building consent authority.

### Step 2 Document review

IANZ checks whether the documentation provided with the application meets accreditation requirements.

### Step 3 Pre-assessment visit (optional)

IANZ visits the applicant, answers questions, meets the staff, discusses the documentation review, and views some of the processes and records to determine whether the organisation is ready to be assessed.

### Step 4 On-site assessment

A team of IANZ assessors and technical building control experts reviews the organisation’s processes, documents and records, and interviews staff to determine whether actions are appropriate and effective, the organisation is competent, and whether the output is technically valid. From this, IANZ prepares a report. The report is systems-based, rather than personal, and may include CARs and/or recommendations for improving practices or documentation. CARs specify actions that must be taken to achieve accreditation, whereas recommendations are non-binding.

### Step 5 Recommendation for accreditation

Once all CARs have been addressed to IANZ’s satisfaction (including reassessment if necessary), the IANZ Programme Manager makes a recommendation to the IANZ Building Professional Advisory Committee (BPAC). This committee reviews the assessment process and decides whether the Chief Executive of IANZ should grant accreditation.

### Step 6 Accreditation

Once accreditation has been achieved, the applicant may apply to the Department for registration as a building consent authority.

# Variations and building consent **amen**

## Definitions:

For the purpose of this guidance article:

- The word *variation* refers to a proposed change to consented building work.
- The word *amendment* means any change to a building consent, even a simple alteration like a handwritten note on the consented plans.
- A *formal amendment* is when the amendment is applied for using Form 2.

It is common for variations to consented building work to take place during a construction project. The change may be as minor as fitting a different style of tap, or as major as using a different cladding system. Brand substitutions may also occur if, for example, a specific-brand product named in the consent turns out to be unavailable.

The way to deal with a variation depends on its nature and impact. In every case, the building consent authority must be informed, as it has the responsibility to consider all variations, decide whether they can be approved and, if so, advise the applicant on the most suitable method to seek an amendment to the building consent.



An amendment can be made in several ways. For straightforward variations, the process could be as simple as a phone call to the building consent authority. If the building consent authority approves the variation, it can note this on the consented plans and specifications. A sketch or written details about the variation can also be attached, if appropriate.

If proposed variations are more significant they need to be considered through a formal amendment process using Form 2, 'Application for project information memorandum and/or building consent'. This form can be found in Part 2 of the Schedule to the Building (Forms) Regulations 2004.

## WHY VARIATIONS MATTER

Varying a building project without obtaining approval can have several negative outcomes.

The main danger is that the building work may not comply with the Building Code. At worst, the building may be unsafe or insanitary.

The building consent authority can refuse to issue a code compliance certificate for work that differs from the building consent (in relation to Code compliance). This is covered by section 94 of the Building Act.

Under section 94(1)(a), a code compliance certificate must be issued if the building consent authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that the building work complies with the consent.

Conversely, if the building work does not match the consented design in relation to Code compliance, the authority can refuse to issue a code compliance certificate. Without one, the owner could have trouble selling the property at a later stage, and may also have difficulty obtaining finance and insurance.

If a code compliance certificate is refused, the building consent authority can issue a notice to fix, giving the property owner a certain timeframe to sort out the issues. This could involve redoing some of the work to a compliant standard, or pulling it down if it cannot be made to comply with the Building Code.

If the property owner does not comply with a notice to fix, the building consent authority has the option of prosecuting them. Successful prosecution could result in an initial fine of up to \$200,000, plus ongoing fines for every day the offence continues.

## ASSESSING A VARIATION

When deciding how to deal with a variation, the council needs to consider how it affects compliance with the Building Code and/or the District Plan.

Note: councils play two roles in this regard. As *building consent authorities* they consider matters relating to the Building Code (under the Building Act). As *territorial authorities* they consider District Plan requirements (under the Resource Management Act).

# Amendments

Performance must be assessed using the same tools normally used to establish 'reasonable grounds' (on which a building consent is granted in the first place). The applicant must substantiate performance, then the building consent authority assesses the proposals using the reasonable grounds test.

The situation is no different with product substitutions. Responsibility falls on the applicant to demonstrate that the proposed substitute will meet the performance requirements of the Building Code. If the building consent authority has existing knowledge about a suggested alternative, justifying its compliance can be a simple matter.

The applicant may not need to go through a formal amendment process (using Form 2), but the building consent authority must still approve the proposed variation, and note a sufficiently detailed description of the change on the consented plans and specifications, so they remain an accurate record of what is built.

## AMENDING THE BUILDING CONSENT

There are two ways the building consent can be amended. The applicant can:

- use Form 2 to submit a revised version of their application to the building consent authority (a 'formal amendment')

- ring, fax, email or visit the building consent authority to give details of the proposed variation. This information can be attached to or noted on the original consented plans.

The best approach depends on the extent and complexity of the proposed variation. The building consent authority should advise the applicant which method to use.

All amendments must be processed by the building consent authority within 20 working days.

## KEY ADVICE

### *For building consent applicants*

- Don't approach a building project with the idea that you'll get your consent first, and sort out the details later. Finalise the details of what you want to build before applying for a consent.
- Before making any variation to consented work you must obtain approval from the building consent authority. Ask the building consent authority's advice on how to proceed – whether to submit a formal amendment (Form 2), or an informal one. Also, ask what kind of information you need to give to justify your proposed variation.
- The designer (and/or builder) may be able to help with the justification. Remember, you need to show how the new proposal complies with the Building Code. The evidence needs to contain sufficient detail to give the building consent authority 'reasonable grounds' on which to make its decision.

- If the building consent authority tells you to go through a formal amendment process, submit your application via Form 2, 'Application for project information memorandum and/or building consent'.
- Submit your application as soon as possible, to avoid delaying building work.
- Even if you don't need to submit a formal amendment (via Form 2), you will still need to provide all the information the building consent authority requires.

### *For builders*

- If you are thinking about varying the building work in any way that differs from the consented plans, seek approval from the property owner or their agent first.
- Give as much notice as possible to limit delays.
- Make sure the designer is kept informed.
- Remind the applicant to contact the building consent authority to seek approval for the variation.
- Explain why the proposed variation 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).

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#### For building officials

- Remind applicants about the need to obtain prior approval if they want to vary building work after a consent is issued.
- Be prepared to take calls from people asking advice on variations. Let them know what information they need to provide to justify their proposals.
- If a proposed variation requires a formal amendment to the building consent, tell them to apply for an amendment via Form 2.
- Simple variations can be approved in a more informal manner, by making a note on the consented plans to show you have been consulted and given your approval.
- If the applicant submits details, sketches or specifications for a proposed variation, attach these to the consented plans.
- Assess the applicant's arguments about how a proposed variation meets the performance requirements of the Building Code, using the same criteria you would normally use to establish 'reasonable grounds'.

- Requirements under the District Plan, local bylaws or other regulations are not matters to be considered under the building consent process. Nevertheless, you may wish to advise the applicant of their other obligations. For example, they may need to consult the council (acting in its capacity as a territorial authority, rather than a building consent authority) if a proposed variation could contravene the District Plan.
- Process amendments within 20 working days, as with a standard building consent application.
- Consider how the variation may affect inspections and revise the inspections schedule if necessary.

#### MORE HELP

The Department will publish a guide to variations and building consent amendments later this year.

Note: this guidance supersedes previous advice on variations given by the Department.

## New handbooks published

A new edition of *The New Zealand Building Code Handbook* has just been published, reflecting the changes introduced by the Building Act 2004, Building (Specified Systems, Change the Use, and Earthquake-prone Buildings) Regulations 2005 and amendments to other documents.

The latest edition provides information on:

- how the building controls regulatory framework works
- current definitions
- lists of all standards referenced in Compliance Documents
- a current index for Compliance Documents.

The revised 'compliance schedule' section from the first *Building Code Handbook* is now contained in a separate publication called the *Compliance Schedule Handbook*.

This contains information on:

- compliance schedule and building warrant of fitness regimes
- how to identify a specified system
- how to develop a compliance schedule
- suggested inspection and maintenance procedures.

*The New Zealand Building Code Handbook* and the *Compliance Schedule Handbook* are available for free electronically on the Department's website ([www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)).

Hard copies can be bought from the Victoria University Book Centre ([www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz)).

For more information, call our Contact Centre on 0800 242 243 or email: [info@dbh.govt.nz](mailto:info@dbh.govt.nz)

# Estimated building costs

The Department provides estimated building costs to help territorial authorities estimate realistic values when they consider the job value provided with a building consent application.

The table below shows the latest figures for various building types by region.

## GUIDE TO THE TABLE

Costing information is provided by construction cost consultants Maltby and Partners Ltd.

The costs are for one-off speculative houses. These figures do not reflect the economies from building group houses, or the additional costs normally associated with architecturally designed houses. Group houses are on average 21 percent cheaper and architecturally designed houses 20 percent more expensive.

**Small house 145 m<sup>2</sup>:**  
Single-storey house on a flat site, with internal double garage, three bedrooms, open-plan kitchen, dining and lounge, bathroom, separate toilet, ensuite and separate laundry.

**Large house 202 m<sup>2</sup>:**  
Single-storey house on a flat site, with internal double garage, four bedrooms, open-plan kitchen and family room, open-plan dining and lounge, bathroom, separate toilet, ensuite, separate dressing room and separate laundry.

**Industrial building 414 m<sup>2</sup>:**  
Single-storey warehouse, with mezzanine on a flat site accommodating warehouse, office accommodation, reception and display area, staff lunchroom, kitchen, and toilet facilities.

**Bulk retail 896 m<sup>2</sup>:**  
Single-storey commercial building on a flat site with two units: one with retail area, two offices, kitchen, and toilet facilities; the other with retail and toilet facilities.

**Retirement home 394 m<sup>2</sup>:**  
Single-storey building on a flat site, including 12 residential bedrooms with washbasins, separate sanitary facilities, dining and lounge, commercial kitchen and laundry, staff accommodation, and office.

For more details on these profiles see visit the Department's website, ([www.dbh.govt.nz/bof\\_cials-estimated-building-costs](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/bof_cials-estimated-building-costs)).

## Disclaimer

The estimated unit construction costs are based on current commercial prices of materials and labour, plus allowances for contractors' overheads and margins. Pricing is based on a model building for each region.

We provide unit construction costs to help territorial authorities assess building consent fees. They are not intended as a definitive cost for actual buildings and should not be used for this purpose.

## BUILDING COSTS PER METRE (\$/M<sup>2</sup>) INCLUDING GST AS AT JANUARY 2007

	SMALL HOUSE	LARGE HOUSE	INDUSTRIAL BUILDING	BULK RETAIL	RETIREMENT HOME
Region	\$/m <sup>2</sup>	\$/m <sup>2</sup>	\$/m <sup>2</sup>	\$/m <sup>2</sup>	\$/m <sup>2</sup>
Auckland	1,683	1,421	1,207	1,238	1,908
Waikato/ Bay of Plenty	1,626	1,379	1,138	1,175	1,853
Wellington	1,655	1,401	1,169	1,206	1,875
Remainder of North Island	1,659	1,408	1,148	1,191	1,882
Canterbury	1,642	1,387	1,143	1,190	1,870
Remainder of South Island	1,629	1,376	1,138	1,183	1,856

# Requirements for the building consent accreditation body

In 2006, the Department appointed International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) as the building consent accreditation body for the building consent authority accreditation scheme.

IANZ will undertake accreditation assessments for organisations charged with undertaking building consent authority functions under the Building Act 2004 (including territorial and regional authorities).

The Department has gazetted some of the requirements for IANZ's role. IANZ will be required to conduct full technical audits of each building consent authority at least every 2 years, while having the ability to undertake special assessment audits at any time deemed appropriate.

Audits will be undertaken in general accordance with ISO/IEC 17011:2004, with specific reference to the standards and criteria for accreditation prescribed in the Building (Accreditation of Building Consent Authorities) Regulations 2006. This must include:

- accompanying and assessing building officials as they undertake their day-to-day duties
- reviewing building consent files
- interviewing a range of building consent authority staff
- conducting case studies of completed or partially completed buildings.

IANZ must maintain accurate and complete records of all audits. This information must be provided to the Department as requested and in standard reporting methods, such as regular and annual reports.

IANZ must also have a procedure for dealing with any complaints against it. The procedure includes:

- the time period by which the complaint must be acknowledged
- the steps that will be taken to substantiate a complaint
- a requirement to document details of the complaint and actions and/or decisions taken
- a requirement to keep the complainant informed about decisions and actions taken.

The Department must be advised when complaints are substantiated, so we have an opportunity to respond before any action is taken.

For full details of the requirements for the building consent accreditation body, see *New Zealand Gazette, No 27* ([www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz)).

More information on the building consent authority accreditation scheme is also available at the Department's website at ([www.dbh.govt.nz/boficials-bca](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/boficials-bca)).

Information about IANZ is available at their website ([www.ianz.govt.nz](http://www.ianz.govt.nz)).

## Consultation Corner

This consultation is open for public feedback. To download a copy of the discussion document or make a submission, visit [www.dbh.govt.nz/consulting-index](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/consulting-index)

### Energy efficiency proposals hot water, commercial HVAC systems

Consultation on proposals relating to hot water systems in domestic residences, and HVAC systems in new commercial buildings.

Submissions close:  
29 June 2007.

# Building Standards Group

## work in progress

### THE PUBLICATION PROCESS FOR:

#### BUILDING CODE CLAUSES

1. Identify need for Clause change

2. Departmental analysis of options for change

3. Prepare proposal for public consultation

4. Public consultation

5. Consider comments received from consultation

6. Prepare Cabinet paper seeking approval of proposed change including consultation with other relevant government departments

7. Prepare drafting instructions for Parliamentary Counsel to draft regulations to make the change

8. Submit draft regulations to Cabinet for approval

9. Regulations made by Governor-General

#### COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTS

1. Identify need for change to Compliance Document

2. Appoint project manager and/or establish working group

3. Prepare information for public consultation

4. Public consultation

5. Consider comments received from consultation

6. Prepare draft for Chief Executive's approval

7. Publication

#### B1 Structure - Concrete Standards

Proposed citation of revised concrete Standard NZS 3101: 2006 in Compliance Document B1.  
Stage: Preparing information for public comment.

#### B1 Structure - Loading Standards

Proposed citation of new loading Standards (AS/NZS 1170 Parts 0, 1, 2 and 3, and NZS 1170 Part 5) in Compliance Document B1.  
Stage: Public consultation closed on 16 March 2007. Analysing public comments.

#### B1 Structure - Masonry Standards

Proposed amendment to Compliance Document B1 by updating the masonry design Standard to NZS 4230: 2004.  
Stage: Public consultation closed on 3 April 2007. Analysing public comment.

#### C Fire Safety – Type 4 and 5 alarms

Proposed amendments to Compliance Document C, concerning the design requirements for alarm systems in certain buildings.  
Stage: Public consultation closed on 13 April 2007. Analysing public comment.

#### C Fire Safety – Sprinkler systems

Joint public consultation with Standards New Zealand over proposal to reference NZS 4541: 2006 Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems in C/AS1.  
Stage: Analysing public comment.

#### F3 Hazardous substances and processes

Amendment to Compliance Document F3, to comply with the HSNO Act covering the storage of hazardous liquids and gases in buildings.  
Stage: Published on 22 March 2007.

#### F4 Safety from falling

Amendments to Code Clause F4.  
Stage: Amended regulations for Code Clause F4 being gazetted.  
Amendments to Acceptable Solution F4/AS1, concerning barrier heights.  
Stage: Published on 22 March 2007.

#### F6 Lighting for emergency

Amendments to Code Clause F6 and Compliance Document F6.  
Stage: Amended regulations for Code Clause F6 being gazetted.

#### F7 Warning systems

Proposed amendments to Compliance Document F7, concerning the design requirements for alarm systems in certain buildings.  
Stage: Public consultation closed on 13 April 2007. Analysing public comment.

#### G4 Ventilation – Apartment ventilation

Amendment to G4/AS1, relating to the ventilation of apartments with one external wall.  
Stage: Public consultation closed on 13 April 2007. Analysing public comment.

#### G6 Airborne and impact sound

A complete review of Code Clause G6 and Compliance Document G6. Proposals include new methods for measuring sound and new criteria for protection from environmental sound.  
Stage: Preparing cost benefit study.

#### G14 Industrial liquid waste

Amendments to Code Clause G14 and Compliance Document G14.  
Stage: Amended regulations for Code Clause G14 being gazetted.

#### G Services and facilities

Amendments to the following list of Compliance Documents to update publications referenced, and amend Acceptable Solution G1/AS1 for toilet numbers and line of sight provisions.

#### G1 Personal hygiene

#### G4 Ventilation

#### G9 Electricity

#### G10 Piped services

#### G11 Gas as an energy source

#### G12 Water supplies

#### G13 Foul water

Stage: Published on 22 March 2007.

#### H1 Energy efficiency

Proposed amendments to Code Clause H1 and Compliance Document H1, relating to insulation, solar hot water systems, and commercial lighting.  
Stage: The Prime Minister and Minister for Building and Construction have announced the Government's intention to amend the Building Code for improved thermal performance of houses. Parliamentary Counsel Office is drafting amendments to Code Clause H1. Changes to related Compliance Documents are being finalised for approval, with anticipated publication from June 2007.

Proposed amendments to Code Clause H1, and Compliance Documents H1 and G12, relating to domestic hot water and commercial HVAC systems.  
Stage: Proposals released for public consultation, closing 29 June.

# Determinations issued

## **DETERMINATION 2007/37**

### *Dispute about the code compliance of a liquid-applied membrane*

The owners of a balcony deck applied for a determination after the territorial authority refused to issue a code compliance certificate for the house on the basis of not being satisfied that a liquid-applied membrane on the balcony complied with clauses B2 and E2 of the Building Code.

The building work related to the membrane applied to the deck of a large timber-framed external balcony situated at the upper level of a two-storey house. The balcony spanned most of the north elevation, constructed over living spaces. The balcony deck was finished with a fibreglass-reinforced vinyl membrane, with upstands under the main wall and balustrade cladding, and water discharged into a metal gutter at the front of the balcony.

According to the manufacturer, the membrane was applied to a plywood substrate in accordance with its standard specification, which was applicable at the time of installation.

The Department commissioned an independent expert to inspect and report on the building work. The expert's report was considered by the Department, along with the parties' submissions.

### **The submissions**

The applicants noted that the territorial authority had refused to issue a code compliance certificate as it did not accept that the membrane was an alternative solution. The consent for the building work was issued before the Building Act 2004 came into force.

The applicants also set out the verification, service history, direct comparisons, testing and product approval of the membrane.

The territorial authority did not make a formal submission. However, it did express concern that a favourable decision could be interpreted as universal acceptance of the membrane.

### **The determination**

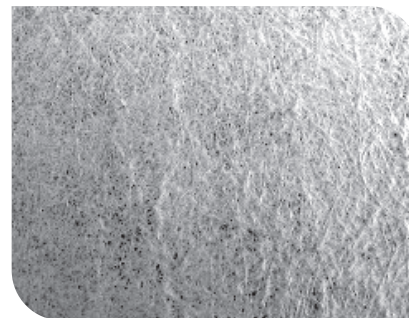
A draft determination was sent to both parties. The applicants accepted the draft. The territorial authority accepted the outcome of the determination but was concerned that the only action required to make the system code-compliant was recoating.

The territorial authority also noted that, while the product might comply with the Code in this case, the supplier and the industry could interpret the decision as being a product endorsement. The territorial authority was not making any judgment about its quality, but did not believe the supplier had adequately supported the alternative solution application.

The Department took into account the territorial authority's concerns about the lack of independent product testing or verification of the membrane and the product endorsement issue.

As the use of the membrane was considered to be an alternative solution, the Department applied two criteria used to assess a building product in a particular application for code compliance. These criteria are proven in-service performance and quality of the finished application.

As to the first criterion (in-service performance), the membrane system was provided by an established manufacturer and had been in use for 23 years. After 3 years of service, there was no evidence of moisture entering the building. The expert noted that he had observed this particular membrane



over the past 20 years, and any failures could be attributed directly to associated poor construction detailing and workmanship and not to product failure.

With regard to the second criterion (quality of the finished application), the most common problem with liquid-applied membranes is inadequate quality control at the time of application. In this case, the membrane had been installed to a level of trade practice regarded by the expert as being 'of a high standard', and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and industry guidance documents.

The Department felt that, when considered together, these two criteria provided sufficient grounds to conclude that the membrane system, in this particular case, complied with Clause E2.

However, it was accepted that remedial work was necessary to remedy pin holes in the surface of the membrane, which prevented it from complying with Clause B2. Because this fault was minor, it was concluded that satisfactory rectification would result in it remaining weathertight and thus complying with Clause B2.

The Department agreed with the territorial authority's general points on the need for applicants to provide adequate documentation when seeking a building consent for an alternative solution.

The Department also emphasised that the determination should not be taken as a form of product endorsement, appraisal or certification. If a particular membrane system has been established as being Code compliant on one building, this does not mean the same system will be Code compliant in other situations.

### The decision

It was determined that:

- the membrane did not comply with Clause B2 of the Building Code, so the territorial authority's decision to refuse a code compliance certificate was justified
- once the pin hole defects were rectified, the membrane would comply with the provisions of the Building Code.

### DETERMINATION 2007/23

#### *Dispute over a refused code compliance certificate for a garage*

The owner of the garage applied for a determination after the territorial authority refused to issue a code compliance certificate, on the grounds of being unsatisfied that building work on the garage complied with the Building Code.



### The building work

A detached single garage was converted into a double garage attached to an existing house. One wall of the double garage was an existing concrete block boundary wall, the other external walls were timber frame clad with timber weatherboards. The garage was unlined, except for a length of internal wall between the garage and the house. The existing concrete slab floor of the garage was extended. The floor of the garage was 50 mm above the level of the drive.

The determination related to the clearance between the concrete drive and the bottom of the timber cladding at each side of the garage door. The clearance varied from approximately 20 to 80 mm.

### The submissions

The applicant described the location and construction of the garage. The applicant also noted the garage floor did not have the 100 mm clearance set out in E2/AS1 but had a 50 mm clearance above the driveway. Water could not enter the garage front entrance due to the driveway being either level or sloping away towards the kerb.

The territorial authority did not make a submission.

Continued on page 18

# Determinations issued *continued*

## The determination

Both parties were sent a draft determination, which they accepted without comment.

Because of general interest in the application of E2/AS1 to unlined garages, the Department further amended the draft, expanding the discussion on E2/AS1, but without altering the substantive decision.

The final determination included relevant extracts from the Building Code and Acceptable Solution E2/AS1.

The limits on application of Clause E2.2 mean that if moisture from outside is no more harmful than moisture from inside, then Clause E2.2 does not apply. Therefore, the first question to answer in this case was if moisture from outdoors would cause more damage than moisture from indoor sources.

Clause E2.2 does not apply to buildings such as open barns, so there is no need for the cladding of such buildings to be weathertight. However, while not required to comply with Clause E2, the cladding is still required to comply with other clauses, in particular B1 and B2. In the absence of specific information about the harm likely to arise from internal moisture in this case, the Department decided

that the garage was required to comply with Clause E2. Even so, the Acceptable Solution E2/AS1 did not necessarily apply. In fact, Paragraph 1.2.1 of E2/AS1 excludes 'garages and other unlined structures'.

The Department took the view that E2/AS1 did not apply, as it excludes unlined garages. This did not mean that Clause E2 itself does not apply, but the requirements of E2/AS1 could have been 'in excess of the minimum required by the Building Code' for this garage.

In an unlined garage, any moisture that reaches the framing from outside is not likely to cause undue dampness or damage to building elements contrary to Clause E2.3.2, because:

- a higher level of dampness is acceptable in a garage than in a habitable room
- framing timbers (with the possible exception of bottom plates) are less likely to be damaged by moisture because they are exposed to the atmosphere and the moisture is likely to dissipate before it can result in any damage.

However, though a lesser degree of weathertightness is acceptable for unlined garages, framing members and claddings must still comply with Clauses B1 Structure and B2 Durability.

In this case, even though some of the provisions of E2/AS1 might be in excess of minimum requirements, it may still be used as a benchmark or guideline.

The only requirement of E2/AS1 that needs to be considered is the clearance between the bottom of the cladding and the adjacent ground or paved surface. The purpose of that clearance is to:

- protect the bottom plate against water splashing up behind the cladding, and
- protect the bottom plate and the cladding against moisture in direct contact with the bottom of the cladding, including free water and moisture in any debris that might accumulate.

The bottom plates of the garage were H3.1 treated and protected against the accumulation of external moisture by a damp-proof course. It was expected the weatherboards would also be H3.1 treated.

The applicant submitted that the specified clearance to the bottom of the cladding was not needed, because the slope of the driveway meant water could not reach the front of the garage. This submission was not accepted, because (regardless of the driveway slope) it was still possible for rain-splash and water to run off the face of the building, meaning that debris (and water) could still accumulate beneath the cladding.

It was also noted that the clearance between the cladding and the adjacent ground or paved surface was relevant to Clause B2, not only to protect against moisture, but also to facilitate normal maintenance.



## Compliance with the Building Code

The Department was of the view that the garage opening complied with the two requirements of Paragraph 9.1.3.4 of E2/AS1. However, the base of the weatherboard cladding at each side of the opening did not comply with the clearance required for lined garages. While it was recognised that some clearance (less than the 100 mm required by E2/AS1) could provide adequate protection, current clearances were not accepted as being sufficient.

It was concluded that the clearance between the driveway and the bottom of the weatherboard cladding on the front of the garage did not comply with the Building Code.

The applicant proposed that a drainage channel be installed across the front elevation of the garage. In the absence of proper plans and specifications for such a channel, the Department observed (but did not determine), that such action could make the garage Code compliant.

### The decision

It was determined that the building work did not comply with Clause E2 of the Building Code. The territorial authority's decision to deny a code compliance certificate was confirmed.

To read all the determinations in summary or in full, go to:

[www.dbh.govt.nz/determinations](http://www.dbh.govt.nz/determinations)

# Learning curve



Wellington Institute of Technology  
Te Whare Wānanga o te Awakairangi

## New course – Diploma in Building Surveying, Level 6

The Diploma in Building Surveying was developed by Wellington City Council and WelTec. It cross-credits with the proposed new NZQA Diploma in Building Controls, and has a mix of distance learning, e-learning and class contact. Aimed at students working in or interested in a building inspection or certification role in the public or private sector.

### Office Practice

Develop skills to manage the administrative tasks of building inspection. Covers computing and office administration skills.  
Available: June and October  
Fee: \$462  
Credit value: 12

### Building Control A – Legislation

Develop understanding and knowledge of the law relating to building controls.  
Available: June and October  
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Credit value: 20

### Building Control B – Consent Process

Learn to assess documentation and apply for building and land-use approvals.  
Available: October  
Fee: \$616  
Credit value: 16

### Building Control C – Inspections

Learn to assess a building's compliance with approved documentation and legislation.  
Available: June  
Fee: \$616  
Credit value: 16

### Residential Construction (Non-Specific Design)

Develop knowledge of construction materials, techniques and design principles to evaluate the performance of residential buildings.  
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Credit value: 30

## Professional Practice

Integrate technical knowledge and skills with knowledge of the legal and professional environment to negotiate with clients, achieving acceptable outcomes.  
Available: June  
Fee: \$1,002  
Credit value: 26

### How to enrol

You can enrol for the full Diploma in Building Surveying programme or for individual modules, or elect to enrol for accelerated assessment. Enrolment forms can be downloaded from WelTec's website:

[www.weltec.ac.nz/enrolhow.htm](http://www.weltec.ac.nz/enrolhow.htm)

Contact **Vanessa Kooyman**,  
Programme Administrator,

[vanessa.kooyman@weltec.ac.nz](mailto:vanessa.kooyman@weltec.ac.nz)

**(04) 920 2819**

## CHANGES TO CITE

BRANZ have run the CITE (Construction Industry Training Enterprise) courses for 5 years. Following an in-depth review, BRANZ has decided to remove CITE at the end of June.

BRANZ wishes to continue its role in educating the industry, and intends to continue this in the form of seminars, licensing current CITE courseware to other education providers, and making subject matter experts available.

BRANZ is confident the new national qualifications for building officials will provide appropriate education for the sector. The development of this framework is being overseen by the Building Officials Institute of New Zealand (BOINZ) in cooperation with the Department, the Society of Local Government Managers and Local Government New Zealand.

Those developing this qualification have made it clear that they will work with BRANZ to agree on cross-crediting guidelines for new qualifications for those who have completed CITE courses. This information will be posted on the BRANZ website ([www.branz.co.nz](http://www.branz.co.nz)) as soon as it is confirmed.

BRANZ thanks its CITE students for their patronage and wishes them well in their future studies and careers.

# Learning curve *continued*

## SCHEDULE OF TRAINING

### SEMINARS – 2007

'The Accessible Journey'  
Accessibility for all New Zealanders

Seminar type	Location	Dates
2-day seminar	Auckland	25–26 June
Refresher	Auckland	27 June
2-day seminar	Wanganui	19–20 July
2-day seminar	Nelson	13–14 Sept
2-day seminar	Manukau City	19–20 Nov

Cost of 2- and 1-day seminars:  
Includes copy of Barrier Free NZ Trust  
Resource Handbook for Barrier Free  
Environments.

Seminar type	Cost (excl) GST	Cost (excl) GST
2-day course	\$444.44	\$500
Specialist 1- or 2-day course	Rate negotiable with any interested organisation, company, territorial authority	
1-day refresher course	\$226	\$254

**Refresher Courses:** Three 1-day refresher courses will be held this year. Only BFAs and those who have attended a 2-day seminar will be eligible to register. These 1-day courses are updates on legislation and case studies.

**Minimum Numbers:** All Barrier Free Trust events require minimum numbers of attendees to be registered for a given location, 14 days before the event. If minimum numbers are not reached by this date, a general email will be sent to all on our database giving notice of possible cancellation. If minimum numbers are still not reached after 1 week and the event is cancelled, potential attendees will be advised of this and options made available at alternative locations or alternative arrangements will be made.

### Enquiries to:

Administrator – Barrier Free  
New Zealand Trust,  
PO Box 25-064,  
Panama Street, Wellington  
☎ (04) 915 5848 or 027 240 7502

Fax: (04) 915 5849  
✉ seminar@barrierfreenz.org.nz  
🌐 www.barrierfreenz.org.nz

## BRANZ PASSIVE FIRE PROTECTION SEMINAR

During July BRANZ is running seminars on passive fire protection measures – an incredibly important part of building design and construction. The seminars are aimed at building officials, architects and designers, and will be presented by BRANZ Senior Fire Engineer Ed Soja, on the following dates.

- Christchurch – Monday 16 July
- Wellington – Wednesday 18 July
- Auckland – Wednesday 25 July

The seminars have been accredited for 15 CPD points by the NZ Registered Architects Board and are recognised by the BOINZ Training Academy.

Visit the BRANZ website ([www.branz.co.nz](http://www.branz.co.nz)) for more details and to register online. Alternatively, contact the Seminar Coordinator on 04 237 1170, or email:

[SeminarRegistrations@branz.co.nz](mailto:SeminarRegistrations@branz.co.nz)

## WANT YOUR COURSE LISTED IN LEARNING CURVE?

If you offer educational courses on building issues, or host building-related seminars, and would like us to mention them here, please email: [codewords@dbh.govt.nz](mailto:codewords@dbh.govt.nz) (with the subject line 'Learning Curve').

Let us know the details of your course or seminar, including dates, locations, booking details, plus – if relevant – qualifications and prerequisites.



### Important changes to BIA website

The content previously available on the Building Industry Authority website ([www.bia.govt.nz](http://www.bia.govt.nz)) is now located within the Department of Building and Housing website:

🌐 [www.dbh.govt.nz](http://www.dbh.govt.nz)

### Legality of Department of Building and Housing interpretations

Only the courts can issue binding interpretations of the Building Act 1991 and Building Act 2004 and Regulations. Indications and guidelines issued by the Department of Building and Housing, either in *Codewords* or other communications, are provided with the intention of helping people to understand the legislation. They are, however, offered on a 'no-liability' basis and, in any particular case, those concerned should consult their own legal advisors.

### Editorial enquiries

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☎ 0800 242 243  
✉ [codewords@dbh.govt.nz](mailto:codewords@dbh.govt.nz)

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