

EDITORIAL

We can't seem to get away from it – but the 'A' word is dominating our existence at the moment – Accreditation.

As predicted, the International Accreditation of New Zealand (IANZ) was unable to cope with the incredibly huge workload imposed upon it when the Government insisted that all Building Control Authorities (councils) had to be accredited by 30 November 2007, and so extended the timeline to 30 June 2008.

Your Council has not taken its foot off the gas pedal, and we are still endeavouring to be accredited before the first deadline expires. We have now sent off all the documentation required but are waiting for IANZ to nominate a date to come and view us in person.

The first councils waited three weeks for their review, and then it extended to four weeks, then five and we are still waiting.

All this aside, the 'A' word will still be good for us all, when it is eventually implemented – we have to say what we do, and then do what we say. The systems and processes have already improved but there is a downside. All of this extra workload with the same resources has delayed the throughput of building consents because we now have to document and process work to a much higher standard.

We have advertised our delays, but good documentation means we can process more quickly with lower costs.

Jeff Jamieson

TIMBER & FLASHINGS

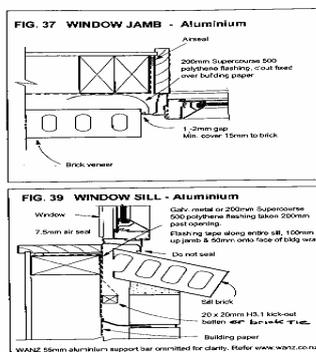
From time to time the office chatter from the Building Inspectors coming in from outside inspections becomes repetitive about one subject or another; this usually means that something is getting missed or perhaps not done quite to standard.

Of late, other than the usual problems this time of the year with wet timber, the delays and re-inspections this causes (unfortunately out of our control), there have been two other items talked about a fair bit.

Firstly, timber grades. We are all hopefully now well aware of the new stress grading changes that came in on April 1 this year. The designers have got their heads largely around this, and during processing of your consents we have verified what's required, though on site inspectors are still finding that the right grades of timber, as specified on the consented plans, have not been installed. If this has happened on your job, you will already know what difficulties this can create to rectify. If not, please stay alert and don't assume without double checking your consent and approved documentation (kept on site at all times of course).

Secondly, window sill flashings to brick veneer. For some reason, because we wrap the Supercourse or similar product around into the aluminium window fin on the side (as shown on detail), we think the same goes on the bottom – wrong. Please see attached detail showing the same product against the timber sill or under the window sill carried along approx 200mm past the opening and kicking out from the paper by either a small treated timber bead or more commonly by using the brick tie to deflect water away from the house frame.

Please remember if the sill flashing is done like the side flashing then any water coming from above (leaking corner mitre or similar) will be drawn towards the breathable paper and into the wall cavity – it is imperative that water is deflected away. If in doubt, please refer to your consented documentation (oh! have I said that before).



PLAN QUALITY

When the revised Building Act was rewritten in 2004, it changed the way we had to look at how we process and approve documentation.

The 'old' 91 Act allowed councils the option to issue a Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) when the work complied with the Code.

Back then, when minor changes occurred, it wasn't quite so critical to document, because if the change still complied with the Code then we could still issue a CCC.

Under the new Act (2004) the rules were changed so that councils can only issue a CCC when the work is completed to comply with the DRAWINGS.

This means that even small changes have to be documented, and Alterations to an Existing Consent applied for when these occur – this adds to costs.

This is where it is vitally important that you and your designer decide in advance the complete reality of your project, and provide the complete documentation required.

Council assesses (processes) the plans, specifications and documentation required, and this is where cost savings can be made when complete documentation is supplied.

If we have to write a letter back to you this costs you money, and when we receive the answers back, the whole assessment process must start all over again – costing you money and delays to your approval.

It's simple really – select a good designer and pay them to provide you with quality documents.

Better plans and better documentation will provide a quicker and cheaper service.



THE BUILDING CODE REVIEW – second discussion document

The Department of Building and Housing has released a second discussion document for the Building Code Review. They are seeking your views and comments on this important document that will help shape the future Building Code.

The first discussion document, released in May 2006, asked for feedback on which features of building work the Building Code should cover. The second discussion document asks for views on the Building Code performance requirements – how those features of building work should perform.

An important idea in the Department's work on the Building Code review, and in this discussion document, is sustainability.

The Department has looked at how buildings can use resources more efficiently and how buildings should connect with their wider environment. They have also considered how buildings can contribute to social sustainability by promoting health and wellbeing and improved accessibility. Key points in the discussion document include:

- A new Building Code structure, based on the needs of Code users, especially building designers and building consent authorities.
- A new fire design and performance framework.
- A new system of tolerable impacts, recognising that buildings need to meet different performance requirements depending on their importance and risks to building users and society.
- Possible use of projected lifetime CO₂ emissions of buildings as the principal measure of resource efficiency, including energy and water efficiency, construction materials and construction waste.
- Consideration of internal space requirements for housing that improve accessibility.
- Connection of buildings to the outdoors.
- Updates and clarifications of existing requirements, in line with stakeholder comments.
- How the principles of universal design and adaptability can be applied in the Building Code.

The discussion document proposes three different types of changes to the Code:

- Changes that clarify existing requirements.
- Changes that bring in different performance requirements, changes to the scope of requirements or different approaches to describing requirements.
- Ideas for some changes that are bold, are longer term and need further development with external expertise and consultation with the sector.

The overall impact of the changes will be to clarify building performance requirements, leading to better decision-making and more certainty about building quality. It is likely that changes will be introduced in stages, with the most straightforward ones being made first. They are considering producing a long-term implementation plan, which would provide certainty for the building sector about when changes would be introduced.

The discussion document has been distributed widely to the building sector and other interested parties. It is also available on the Department's website. www.dbh.govt.nz and submissions close on 28 September 2007.

Thanks to Code Words.

BUILDING CONSENT GUIDE

The Department of Building and Housing (DBH) has produced a 44 page booklet entitled “Guide to applying for a building consent (simple residential buildings)”.

This is an excellent publication and it has been written to help designers, builders, homeowners, agents and developers by explaining the minimum information needed for a building consent application.

It is not generally intended as a guide for homeowner-applicants, because preparing documentation for consent applications, particularly for new building projects, requires a detailed knowledge of the Building Code and building process.



Copies are available free at the front counter of Customer Services at the Council or from the DBH.

SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS

The impending longer days and warmer weather brings thoughts of getting existing swimming pools ready for plenty of summer use.

Now is the time to spray the pool fence and gate latching mechanism with a good release agent (CRC or similar) and to carry out any necessary repairs to achieve compliance with the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987.

Remember, it is the property owner's responsibility to maintain pool fencing in good working order at all times.

There are amended and new regulations about to come into force so you are well advised to build your new pool fence to accommodate the proposed legislation.

The Fencing of Swimming Pools Act:

The Fencing of Swimming Pools Act 1987 is to protect young children from the danger of drowning in unfenced swimming pools. It does this by requiring owners to fence their pools. If your pool has the capability of water depth greater than 400mm (16 inches) then it is required to be fenced in accordance with the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act.

NB: This includes blow up and temporary pools. All pools, no matter when they are installed, must comply with the Fencing of Swimming Pools Act.

Do pools require a building consent?

All pool fencing requires Building Consent, including that around spa pools, and pools require consent for the construction of the pool itself. Contact your local council if you have any questions about the information needed for a pool related building consent.

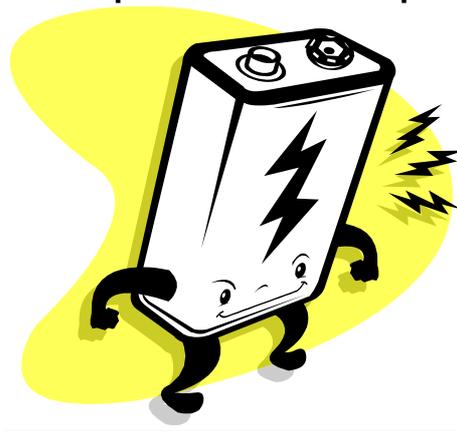
Where the fence must be situated:

The fence must only surround the pool and the area immediately around the pool. This area can only include things in association with the pool - for example, changing sheds. It must not include things that are not related to the pool - for example, clothesline, vege gardens and children's play equipment.

Buildings may form part of the pool fence provided they comply with the Act, and any doors opening to the pool must comply. Boundary fences may form part of the pool fence provided they meet the requirements of the Act.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY – New H1 Compliance Document published



The Department has published a new edition of the Building Code Clause H1 Compliance Document. It reflects the energy efficiency improvements announced by Ministers in May. New houses and major extensions to existing houses will need to use about 30% less heating energy to achieve healthy indoor temperatures. The required R-values for thermal insulation in all types of houses will increase.

The changes will be phased in gradually to allow the industry to adapt. In the South Island and the Central Plateau of the North Island, the new Compliance Document (and the corresponding Building Code Clause change) will become effective on 31 October 2007. Lower North Island, including Wanganui, will follow on 30 June 2008, and Auckland and areas further north on 30 September 2008.

Commercial lighting in new and refitted buildings will also need to be more energy efficient. These changes will become effective on 31 October 2007.

Copies of the new Compliance Document and the amended Code Clause can be obtained on the Department's website (www.dbh.govt.nz) or by calling 0800 242 243.

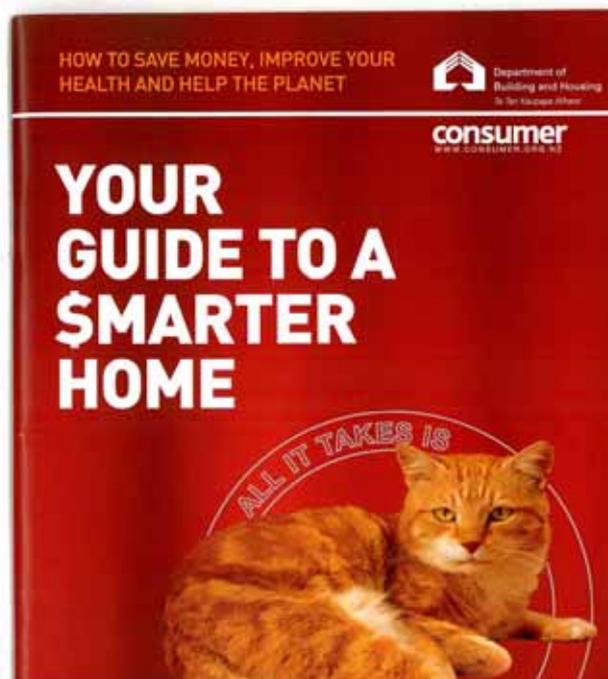
CAMPAIGN FOR SMARTER LIVING!

New Zealanders are being encouraged to be more energy efficient in their homes, leading to health, financial and environmental benefits. The Department of Building and Housing's campaign focuses on three core messages:

1. Saving energy reduces your power bills.
2. A warm home is a more comfortable and healthier one.
3. Reducing energy use helps the environment.

A four page insert in community newspapers nationwide was followed by the publication of a more extensive booklet and series of advertisements now on television. Guidance is offered on topics including insulation, heating and lighting as well as home buying, building and maintenance. A range of no/low cost tips and recommended worthwhile investments show how people can achieve better energy efficiency and cost savings in these areas. They are also referred to the Smarter Homes website for further information.

The programme reflects the Government's focus on sustainability and the aim of New Zealand becoming a carbon neutral nation. The *Your Guide to a Smarter Home* booklet is available online at www.smarterhomes.org.nz. If you would like a copy, please email info@dbh.govt.nz or phone 0800242243.



LICENSING IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

Voluntary licensing in the building is now very close and more details of how this will work have been announced.

The licences that will be available late this year are Design, Site 1, 2 and 3, and Carpentry. Site 1, 2 and 3 cover respectively the roles of builders, site supervisors and construction managers.

If you are considering applying, you can now see in detail what you are required to know and be able to do. To do this, go to the *Licensed Building Practitioners Rules 2007* on the Department of Building and Housing website at www.dbh.govt.nz.

The Department of Building and Housing will soon publish a detailed guide to help individuals decide what to do. From 1 October 2007, licensing application packs will be available. The processing of applications will begin from November 1, with the first licences likely to be issued in the New Year.

For more information on licensing or to receive an electronic newsletter, visit www.dbh.govt.nz/occupational-licensing or call 0800 606 050.

