

WDC— QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

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Passive Fire Protection Seminar

Passive Fire Protection is an incredibly important part of commercial design and construction. Last year BRANZ released four bulletins that detail the good practice guidelines relating to passive fire protection in New Zealand.



BRANZ is running a seminar to bring the whole package together in a practical session. Our nearest venue is Palmerston North on Thursday, 25 March 2010. For bookings and details, register online at www.branz.co.nz

Commercial property with public access

Back in time, under the 'old' Building Act and on the introduction of the 'new' Act on 31 March 2005, owners of commercial buildings, to which the public can have access, were given five years (until 31 March 2010) to either complete their work and have a Code Compliance Certificate issued, or apply for a Certificate for Public Use.

This is a reminder to owners of buildings that fit this category to complete their project or apply for a Certificate of Acceptance.



Licensing streamlined for qualified builders and tradespeople

Becoming a licensed builder will be much easier for New Zealand's more than 5000 qualified builders and tradespeople following a streamlining of the application process announced by Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson on 12 February 2010.

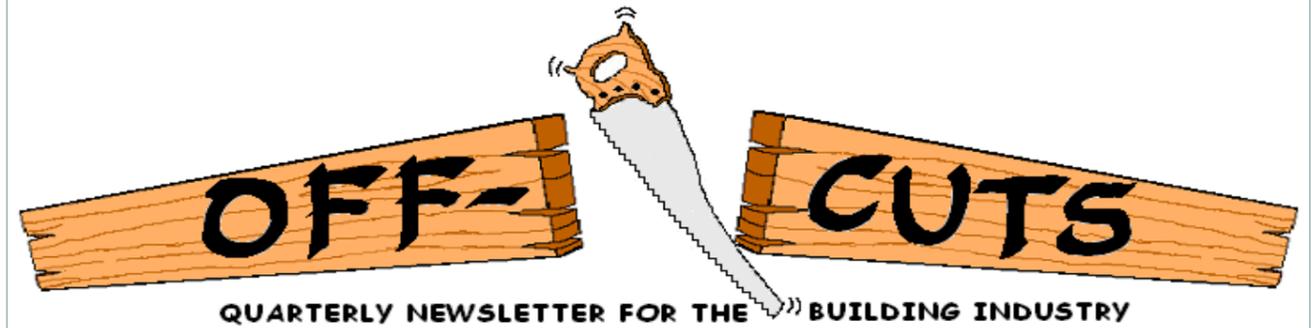


"Qualified builders and tradespeople with a good track record will find it faster, easier and cheaper to get themselves licensed. We are recognising the hard yards that these people have already put in to get qualified. They shouldn't then have to wade through layers of red tape to get licensed. So without compromising quality or safety, we've streamlined the process for them," Mr Williamson said.

Representatives of the Certified Builders Association of New Zealand (CBANZ) and the Registered Master Builders Federation (RMBF) joined Mr Williamson at the launch.

"Builder licensing is a key part of the Government's commitment to building quality. We expect nearly 20,000 building practitioners to be licensed by 2012. I'm pleased that our two largest building industry organisations are fully behind the scheme and simplified application process. It will now be much easier for their members to become licensed," Mr Williamson said.

The announcement is part of the Government's Better Building Blueprint package of initiatives that will make it easier and cheaper for New Zealanders to build good quality homes and buildings.



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Editorial



Our building industry continues to operate in a sea of change. A range of new initiatives have been introduced into the mix early this year.

One of the main changes trumpeted by the Government is the 'MultiProof' consent process, where national organisations such as group housing/garage manufacturers can get their building consent approved at a national level and then supply us (local council) with pre-approved documentation. Other 'cost saving' initiatives include the voluntary Project Information Memorandum (PIMs) and guidelines for making minor variations to consents easier to administer.

In the mix also was the announcement that Government will loan up to \$200,000 for Maori to build homes on multiple-

owned ancestral land.

But the big event that has caused lively debate within the office is the new proposal to upgrade NZS 3604.

'3604' as it is affectionately known is the equivalent of the builder's 'bible' and every builder has a copy in their ute. For those that are interested, it is your opportunity to influence the timber framed standard for the next decade. There's an old saying that goes along with the lines of - if you don't contribute to the discussion, then don't moan about the result.

Get the draft standard and have your say. You'll thank yourself for your input into the process.

*Jeff Jamieson
Team Leader Building Services*

Guidance for solar water heaters

The Department of Building & Housing has published *Guidance for solar water heaters* to help suppliers, installers and Building Consent Authorities to better understand the Building Code performance criteria for solar water heaters. It provides guidance about the installation of solar water heaters with solar collectors larger than 4m², the durability of particular materials used for their construction and/or installation and relaxing the inclination requirements (angle of the solar collector).

The guidance document should be read in conjunction with the Acceptable Solution for solar water heaters (G12/AS2), which came into effect in December 2007. The guidance document provides a range of options as possible performance based solutions and helps readers to design and evaluate specific performance based solutions (Alternative Solutions) for themselves.

Guidance for solar water heaters can be downloaded online— see www.dbh.govt.nz under Publications.

MultiProof

From 1 February 2010, volume builders can obtain a MultiProof or National Multiple-Use Approval for standardised building designs that are intended to be replicated several times. MultiProof approvals are issued by the National Multiple-Use Approval Service of the Department of Building & Housing.

A MultiProof is a statement by the Department that a specific set of building plans and specifications complies with the New Zealand Building Code. Under the Building Act 2004 (as amended in 2009), Building Consent Authorities (BCAs) must accept a MultiProof as evidence of Building Code compliance.

MultiProof approvals will create time and cost savings for volume builders by removing the need for the same or substantially similar building designs to be assessed repeatedly by individual building consent authorities

for Building Code compliance. The timeframe for building consent decisions is reduced from 20 days to just 10 days. A building consent will **still be needed**. The Wanganui District Council will still:-

- Approve site-specific details, including foundations and utilities
- Ensure that any MultiProof conditions have been met, and
- Undertake normal inspections during construction.



Compliance Schedules for Commercial jobs that have Specified Systems (SS)

The Department of Building & Housing is toughening up on the quality of Compliance Schedules (C/S) issued for a Building Warrant of Fitness (BWOFF).

In the past this information was fudged up in a hurry at the same time a building's Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) was issued, often with poor and somewhat generic information thrown at us at the last minute. The requirement now is for full and correct information, inspection regime, standards referred to etc to be supplied with the Building Consent Application form and referred to in the documentation. If this is glossed over at this time, we then need to ask for further information at processing time with your consent going on hold until all SS information is provided - we will then issue you with a *draft C/S* which you have time to address and change, if incorrect, while your project is being built.

Along with this required full information up front, at final sign off time (CCC) when the project is complete, you will have given us all the normal installation information. We will also be asking for a C/S plan layout showing where all your features are - this is now required in detail, which will help the building owner and the IQP check in future where to find the SS features you have, and will be valuable information when ownership changes.



Correctly installed insulation

Of concern recently is a report coming out of NSW, Australia, that they have had a recent spate of fires sparked by shoddily installed ceiling insulation.

The fires have been caused by ceiling insulation coming into contact with heat sources such as downlights and exhaust fans.

It is important that they are not covered over and have enough space around them to avoid overheating.

Smoke alarms may take some time before they activate, and so it is vitally important that ceiling insulation and

electrical fittings are installed and maintained properly.



Interconnected smoke alarms for houses

Standards NZ has released NZS 4515, 2009 Interconnected smoke alarms for houses (supersedes NZS 4514:2002).

The standard sets out the requirements for the installation and commissioning of externally powered interconnected smoke alarms.

The standard also provides information on the selection, installation and maintenance requirements for smoke alarms.

The standard notes the power supply can be either mains supply with battery back

up or DC power supply with battery back up.

Security systems can be incorporated into the interconnected smoke alarm system. Hush button shall be provided to temporarily silence the audible alarm.

Smoke alarms shall be located on or near the ceiling - the standard notes where dead air spaces are i.e.: 200mm on ceiling from any wall and 100mm down wall.

Fitting of alarm on a wall shall not be more than 300mm maximum down from the ceiling where ceiling mounting cannot be

achieved. The standard also notes installation clearances from deep ceiling beams and if a beam is more than 460mm deep, it shall be treated as a wall.

Appendix C of the standard is an installation guide and notes the different types of detectors and where they should be fitted.



'Voluntary' PIMs

From 31 January 2010 property owners are no longer required to apply for a PIM (Project Information Memorandum) when considering carrying out building work that requires a building consent.

Prior to this change, we issued a PIM for all building works, and obviously some consents may not have relevant information on the PIM that related to the building consent.

A PIM is still a valuable document, often sought by designers in advance of preparing working drawings to alert them to specific project issues that they may not have been aware of.

Even though you may now elect to not get a PIM, Council is still required to analyse all the relevant information on file that affects your project.

This would then be given to you, the same as in the past, but now it will appear on the building consent if there is any relevant information relating to your project.

Good information is available on the DBH website.



Minor variations

There has been a recent amendment to the Building Act 2004 and the passing of the 'Building (Minor Variations) Regulations 2009' which came into effect on 1 February 2010.

From 1 February 2010 the newly introduced section 45A of the Act enables a building consent authority (Wanganui District Council) to approve minor variations prior to or during construction without having to go through the formal process of issuing a more formal amendment to the building consent.

The reasons for amending the Act and developing regulations to allow for minor variations were to:

- Formalise a number of pragmatic and efficient practices already being operated by some BCAs to deal with minor changes during construction. (Wanganui District Council has already adopted a simplified approach to approving and documenting minor variations).

- Improve national consistency in BCA practices.
- Enable BCAs to lawfully distinguish between minor and other more significant changes to building consents and treat them differently.
- Provide time and cost savings for building owners, builders, BCAs and others when dealing with minor changes to building work for which a consent has already been granted.

The guidance document is available online at: www.dbh.govt.nz/publications-about-the-building-act-2004



3604

Standards NZ has just released the draft standard DZ3604 *timber framed buildings* for public comment.

The deadline for submitting public comments is 7 April 2010.

Standards NZ initiated the project to revise NZS 3604:1999 at the beginning of 2009. As part of this process they sought feedback from stakeholders on the main issues that needed to be addressed through a revision. This feedback then framed the scope of the project.

The technical committee (P3604) and Leadership Group for the review of NZS3604 have approved a **limited technical review** of the Standard.



If you are in the industry, then please take time to read the proposal for the changes and have your say. It is more than 10 years since the standard was last completely reviewed - this version could exist for a further 10 years. To access the public comment draft, go to: <http://shop.standards.co.nz/goto?id=109>