

**WDC— QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY**

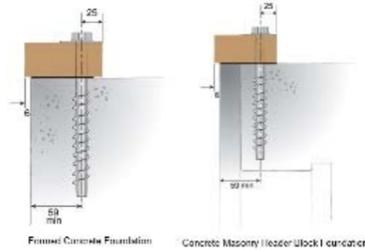
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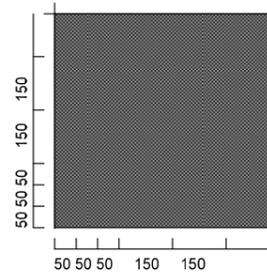
## Update to gib bracing requirements

In January 2010 the gib site guide was updated from the May 2006 edition.

The hold down fixing requirement for BL1, BLP and BLG brace units fixed to a concrete floor have been upgraded from 12KN fixings to 15KN. This means that a 12mm Tru-bolt no longer complies. The correct 15KN fixing is a screw bolt type with a 50x50mm washer and currently there are two brands that have been BRANZ appraised which are Hytli- HUS-H Screw anchors and Fortress screw bolts. The correct placement of these fixings is critical as detail below.



Fixings of all gib brace sheet panels are now consistent with all four corners of the brace panel fixed at 50mm 100mm 150mm from the edge of the sheet and 150mm centres to the remaining of the perimeter of the panel.



## Plasterboard bracing – postline inspections

Postline inspections are part of the Building Consent process and are carried out following installation of the interior plasterboard linings to ensure that the sheets providing bracing to the building for wind and earthquake have been installed as is specified by the wallboard manufacturer.

On the whole, this inspection by Council's Building Control Officer is relatively straightforward but on occasion the bracing system is found not to have been installed as per the consented plans.

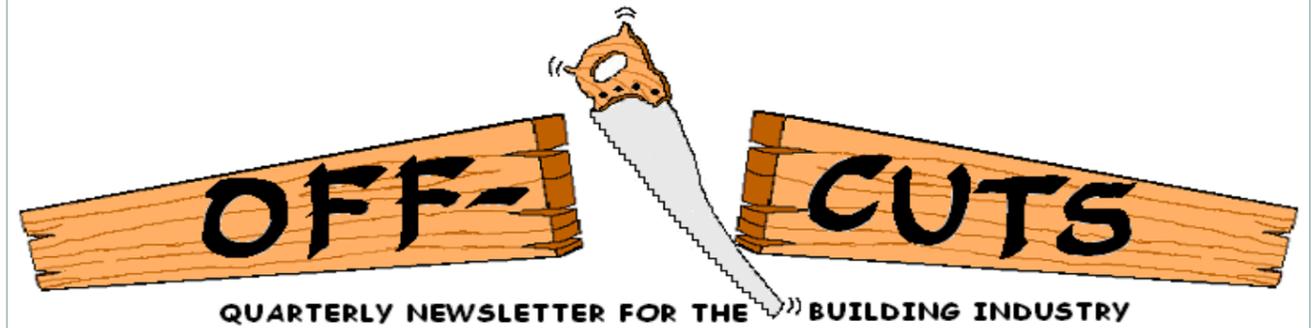
One particular instance of this is when the length of the bracing element has been increased to now include the whole of the wall. This practice results in the need for less sheet fixings within the wall and is preferred by professional installers for reasons of achieving a superior finish to the completed, 'stopped' wall. This practice applies in the main where the horizontal sheet fixing option has been used.

This situation is generally acceptable but the decision to increase the length of the bracing element needs to be made at the framing stage of construction.

Changes of this nature may affect which specific framing fixings are required and the Building Control Officer will need to ensure at framing or pre line inspections that all bottom plate fixings have been installed as required by the wallboard manufacturer's specifications.

Besides the bracing system's framing fixings and sheet fixings requirements, any bracing elements that have been altered or increased in length will have to be recorded. This is to ensure that any future alterations, such as cutting in of a window or door opening, does not then compromise the bracing of the building.

The bracing system is just that, a system, and can involve input from more than one trade. If any deviations from the consented plans are proposed, communication between all affected parties needs to be entered into at an early stage of construction and a new plan formulated for all to follow. If in doubt consult your professional installer or the manufacturer's helpline for guidance, and notify Council.



May 2010

## Editorial



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our housing stock. If there was a leak, the treated timber used slowed down the rate of decay (should the house have leaked) and minimised the repair costs.

We have been fortunate to live in a more conservative community where the trendy leaky designs were not overly common.

Spare a thought for the families that have had to put their lives on 'hold' while they sort out the mess of a 'leaky home'.

The Government needed to act quicker and some pundits are already saying "too little, too late".

Let's be positive - is this the start of the final breakthrough to resolution?

*Jeff Jamieson*

*Team Leader Building Services*

A topical discussion issue at the moment is the new Government proposals on how to fund the 'leaky building' fiasco. In Wanganui we have had a very small number of homes that have been referred to the Weathertightness Homes Resolution Service and have been settled by confidential agreement.

The proposal is for your council to contribute a quarter of the proposed repair cost - but as the old adage says 'the devil is in the detail'. The Government has made it clear that 'betterment' is not an option. For some larger councils, the financial implications will be horrendous and rates will rise as a consequence.

For us here in Wanganui, a very wise policy decision was made years ago to not allow untreated timber to be used for

## Building Act Review: 2010

During March and April we were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals to review the Building Act.

The document - Building Act Review 2010, cost effective quality: Next generation building control - was designed to address that "while the regulatory system is not broken, it is more costly than necessary and less efficient and effective than it could be". The critical issues to address are that the responsibility is not well aligned, there is a lack of balance in the system, and

fragmentation and administration/delivery of service. This document is based on a premise that there is undue reliance on building consent authorities, and part of the solution may be to shift and balance some of the risk by various mechanisms. Their focus is on quality - cutting costs not corners. The submission period has now closed and the Department of Building & Housing (DBH) received close to 400 documents to consider. The proposal heralds a significant shift in focus and we eagerly await the outcome.

### Brick veneer rebates

We've noticed lately that with a number of brick veneer claddings to new houses, brick rebates have not been sealed to the edge of the slab.

coating the edge with two coats of a bituminous emulsion sealer. It is also good trade practice to install a small plaster coving in this area to assist water to run out the weepholes.

When it rains, water passes through the brick veneer, runs down the inside of the bricks and settles in the bottom of the cavity prior to exiting through the weepholes, if this in fact does occur. It may not occur due to insufficient water to create a flow, plus blockages in the cavity and weepholes. The bottom of the cavity could therefore be damp. This dampness can penetrate the edge of the floor slab and rise past the damp proof course under the timber bottom plate. It is for this reason that NZS3604:1999, under section 7, Cl.7.5.4 and figs 7.10, 7.14 and 7.15 requires the edge of the slab to be sealed. This could be achieved by turning up the polythene from the floor slab and stapling it to the frame under the building paper or, alternatively,

Council will be concentrating on this issue to ensure ongoing compliance.

(Thanks to John Oliver and the brickbook for this information).



### Fees increase

Submissions have now closed on the draft Annual Plan 2010/11.

As part of the process, it was proposed to increase building consent and related fees marginally to reflect increased costs.

Should these increases be approved by Council, they will apply from 1 July 2010. This is advance notice of the possible increase - nearer the time for implementation, the fees will be advertised further.



### Exempt sleepouts

We've recently received numerous enquiries as to whether or not sleepouts are exempt under the Building Act 2004. Schedule 1 in the Building Act 2004 contains the clauses that set out the list of works that are exempt from obtaining a building consent (common exemptions are decks under 1 metre high and fences under 2 metres high). A new exemption was introduced in October 2008 for cabins and sleepouts. To be exempt from obtaining a building consent the sleepout must be:

- Greater than its own height to any residential accommodation or to any legal boundary, and
- Not exceed 1 storey
- Not be greater than 10 square metres
- Does not contain sanitary facilities
- Does not have facilities for the storage of potable water
- Does not have cooking facilities
- Must be used in connection with a dwelling

Where sleeping accommodation is provided, the facilities of the existing dwelling will be used for sanitation and cooking. Even though there is no cooking allowed under the exemption, a smoke alarm still must be installed. AND, and this is the big and, even though the work can be exempt, it must still comply with all of the clauses of the Building Code, and it must also comply with the requirements of the Resource Management Act. Even though it may be exempt, you are advised to consult with a Council Planner to ensure you comply.

### Assessing & processing minor variations

Changes to the consented building work are common during the construction process.

Often they are of a minor nature and so on 1 February 2010, under an amendment to the Building Regulations, the procedure for processing minor variations to building consents was simplified. A **minor variation** is a minor modification, addition or variation to a building consent that does not deviate significantly from the plans and specifications to which the building consent relates.

Section 45A of the Act enables a BCA (Wanganui District Council) to grant a minor variation prior to or during construction without having to go through the formal process of issuing an amendment to the building consent. However, the BCA must record the granting of the minor variation in writing.

Section 45A minor variations to building consents is reproduced in full for your information:

45A - Minor Variation to Building consents:

1. An application for a minor variation to a building consent -
  - Is not required to be made in the prescribed form; but
  - Must comply with all other applicable requirements of section 45.
2. Sections 48-50 apply, with all necessary modifications, to an application for a minor variation.
3. A building consent authority that grants a minor variation -
  - Must record the minor variation in writing; but
  - Is not required to issue an amended building consent

A minor variation proposal does not mean a formal application in the way that a building consent amendment is applied for. In some circumstances this may be as simple as a:

- Conversation on site between the builder and the inspector (and then documented on the inspection sheet that is left with the builder/owner on site).
- Covering letter or e-mail from the designer or builder accompanying the revised architectural plans or construction details covering the proposed change.

The minor alterations are then recorded on the building file. It is important that some apparently simple variations may involve structural/engineering issues and/or other legislation. If the variation or change is not minor then it is required to go through the more formal option of fully recording (with full and complete documentation) the proposed changes.

There is good guidance material to assist you further on the DBH website.

## Plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers: Important changes

On 1 April 2010 some very important changes to the rules relating to plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying work came into force when the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 was fully implemented. These changes are primarily aimed at improving public health and safety.

One of the significant changes you will need to be aware of is a change in name. The licence type known as 'registered' will change to 'licensed' and the 'craftsman' will be renamed 'certifying'. The two-tier licence system for gasfitters and plumbers is also being introduced for drainlayers.

Of course, the name change does not in any way change the responsibility that the Building Consent Authority has for ensuring plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying work complies with the Building Code requirements.

The other main changes being introduced are:

- A new requirement for continuing professional development for plumbers and drainlayers;
- Introduction of new exemption classes that will allow those working under a non apprentice limited certificate to continue working, but under the new exemption class;
- Clearer specification of requirements for supervision and testing of work;
- The requirement for licence cards to be carried by all practitioners and produced on demand.

All people involved in doing plumbing, gasfitting, or drainlaying work are, from 1 April 2010, required to carry an identification card so homeowners and building inspectors can check their status. Cardholders are required to produce their card if requested to do so. If a person is required to be supervised, the name and registration number of the supervisor (or training organisation) must be printed on their identification card. This supervisor is ultimately responsible for the work done by the person they are supervising.

A public register of all licensed and certifying people is available at [www.pgdb.co.nz](http://www.pgdb.co.nz) – you can use the search function to find the contact details and licence status of specific individuals.

If a building inspector believes work has been done by someone who does not hold a current licence, or has any other concerns about the competency of workers, they should contact the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board on (04) 494 2970 or by email at [registrar@pgdb.co.nz](mailto:registrar@pgdb.co.nz). For more information about the changes introduced on 1 April 2010, go to [www.pgdb.co.nz](http://www.pgdb.co.nz).

### CHANGES TO LICENCE NAMES

#### Description under old legislation

- Craftsman Plumber
- Craftsman Gasfitter (not existing)
- Registered Plumber
- Registered Gasfitter
- Registered Drainlayer
- Limited Certificate Apprentice Plumber
- Limited Certificate Apprentice Gasfitter
- Limited Certificate Apprentice Drainlayer
- Limited Certificate Plumber
- Limited Certificate Gasfitter
- Limited Certificate Drainlayer

#### Description under new legislation

- Certifying Plumber
- Certifying Gasfitter
- Certifying Drainlayer
- Licensed Plumber
- Licensed Gasfitter
- Licensed Drainlayer
- Limited Certificate Trainee Plumber
- Limited Certificate Trainee Gasfitter
- Limited Certificate Trainee Drainlayer
- Exemption Plumbing under Supervision
- Exemption Gasfitting under Supervision
- Exemption Drainlaying under Supervision