

BUILDING ACT

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Building construction in New Zealand is subject the Building Act – an Act of Parliament.

The general requirements of the Act are elaborated upon in the New Zealand Building Code that has been published by the Department of Building and Housing. This sets out requirements for various aspects of building work such as:

- Structure
- Durability and Water-tightness
- Fire
- Safety

Generally the NZ BC offers two approaches to meetings its requirements, either:

- An acceptable solution to be achieved by detailed compliance with a NZ Standard or with details within the NZ Building Code itself, or

- An alternative solution to be achieved by investigation, testing etc.

Compliance of any particular project is to be evaluated by the Territorial Authority – generally a City Council or equivalent through its Building Consent process.

In order to get a building consent it necessary to produce a set of documents including, drawings, engineering calculations and specifications that demonstrate that the project complies in detail with various clauses of various NZ Standards.

The owner then engages a builder to construct the work in accordance with the documents. To ensure that the work is built correctly, the architect/designer, engineers etc are required to inspect the work (alongside the Council's inspectors) and to certify that its construction has been in accordance with the documents. When the Council is satisfied it will issue a Certificate of Code Compliance.

In the light of experience, research and industry consensus the NZ Standards gradually evolve. It is often the case that in the wake of various disasters, both natural and man-made (eg the Christchurch earthquakes and the “Leaky

Buildings Syndrome”) the Act needs to be amended, causing the NZ Building Code to be amended.