

The Consenting Process

The Building Consent process may seem scary at first, but by knowing the process and what to expect can make it less daunting.

The documentation for even the most simple job passes through many hands including designers, builders, plumbers, homeowners, developers and the Building Consents Authority (BCA) so plans and specifications submitted as part of a building consent application must be up to an acceptable standard. If they are inadequate further information will be requested and this will halt the application processing until the information is provided.

It is important to remember that the BCA is looking for compliance with the Building Code. The clearer the documentation, the less likely problems will occur. Good planning and documentation provides a solid foundation for everyone involved in the building process. We recommend the use of a professional building consultant, draughtsperson or architect.

When you have all relevant documentation prepared and the Building Consent Application form completely filled out, it is recommended that you phone Council's Call Centre (0800 924 723) and make an appointment to lodge your application with a Building Consents Receiving Officer (BCRO). The BCRO will look over the application and documentation prior to accepting it to ensure that it contains all the information required for processing the application.

Once the BCRO accepts the Building Consent Application it then gets added into the Council's computer system and the clock is started. The Building Consent Authority (Waipa District Council) has 20 working days to process the application.

Once in the Council's computer system, the application is checked against the District Plan and the PIM (Project Information Memorandum) is processed.

The application is then passed to the Building Control Officer to check that the project meets the requirements of the building code by using a processing checklist, a copy of which is available on the Building home page of this website (see Information for Designers and Architects). If the Building Consent Officer finds that the information or designs provided with the application are insufficient to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the building code, a request is made for further information. The processing time is suspended until that information has been received by the Council. Time is not suspended if the application requires the input of the NZ Fire Service Commission. They have 10 working days to provide a memorandum concerning fire escapes and access for firefighting.

Once the Building Control Officer has checked that the proposed building project will meet the requirements of the building code, the building consent can be granted. If fees are outstanding an invoice will be sent to the Agent requesting payment prior to the Building Consent being issued. No physical work can be started until the Council has issued building consent and resource consent. If you start to build before this, you are liable for a fine.

When the building consent and resource consent (if applicable) have been issued and approved plans sent to the agent, work may commence. The building consent will have a list of inspections that are required to be carried out by the Building Control Officer to ensure that the building project is being built according to the approved building consent. You will need to book an inspection time with Council's Call Centre (0800 924 723) at least 24 hours in advance.

Once all work is complete, a Final Inspection can be booked. If the Building Control Officer is satisfied that all work is completed and complies with the approved plans and building code, a Code Compliance Certificate (CCC) can be issued. If not, the Building Control Officer will inform the Agent of what needs to be rectified in order to pass the Final Inspection.

Timelines for Building Consents

- All building consents and PIM's have a 20 working day statutory time frame for processing.
- A building consent lapses and is of no effect if the building work has not commenced within 12 months after the date of issue. If you wish to extend this period you will need to arrange with Council for an extension.
- Applications for a final inspection and CCC must be made as soon as practicable after the building work has been completed. If work has not been completed within 2 years after the date was issued any further period must be agreed with between the owner and Council.
- There is a 20 day timeframe to issue a CCC upon notification of completion of the building work.

What is the council's role?

The council administers the Building Act and building regulations within Waipa District by:

- Issuing project information memoranda (PIMs).
- Processing building consent applications.
- Granting or refusing waivers or modifications of the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC).
- Issuing code compliance certificates (CCCs).
- Issuing compliance schedules and recording building warrants of fitness for buildings other than single residential dwellings.
- Enforcing the provisions of the Building Act, the building regulations and the NZBC.
- Maintaining records of building information and making them available to the public.

What's your role?

If you are the owner of a property where building, site works, demolition, plumbing or drainage works are to be done, the Building Act places many responsibilities on you including legal responsibility if any part of the project does not meet Building Act requirements. This includes responsibility for your contractors.