

# Free building Standards

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Over 120 building Standards used for Building Code compliance have been funded for free download thanks to a collaboration between the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Standards New Zealand.



Article is relevant to LBP licence classes: All

This is great news for the building and construction sector as it will reduce financial barriers to achieving Building Code compliance.

As the building system regulator, MBIE has chosen to fund these specific Standards as they are primary references for Building Code compliance. New Zealand is one of the few countries in the world to sponsor free access to building Standards, which has been made possible through the use of the building levy.

This initiative is a follow-up to the highly successful pilot launched in December 2017, when MBIE sponsored six building Standards for free download. In the past 18 months, those Standards have been downloaded over 15,000 times. The newly funded 120 Standards, released in July 2019, were downloaded 60,000 times in the first month.

## Benefits of using Standards

Standards are an accepted method for standardising the way things are done. They provide consistency and certainty about methods for manufacture and testing. Standards are used across the construction industry to enhance products and services, improve safety and quality, set industry best practice and support international trade.

Standards New Zealand uses expert technical committees to develop Standards. This is often done in partnership with other organisations such as Standards Australia or the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

## Key funded Standards

The MBIE-funded Standards were selected because they are referenced in Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods that enable compliance with the Building Code. International and joint Standards (such as AS/NZS) are not included in the sponsorship agreement as copyright for these documents isn't owned by Standards New Zealand. MBIE is continuing to work with Standards New Zealand to find options to extend the number of sponsored Standards available for free download.

## Timber-framed construction

*NZS 3604:2011 Timber-framed buildings* is a key document for many Licensed Building Practitioners (LBPs). When read in conjunction with Acceptable Solution B1/AS1, it describes Building Code compliance methods for the design and construction of timber framing in buildings up to three storeys high.

Other funded Standards relevant to timber-framed buildings include *NZS 3602:2003 Timber and wood-based products for use in building* and *NZS 3640:2003 Chemical preservation of round and sawn timber*, which, when read in conjunction with Acceptable Solution B2/AS1, are used to select appropriately treated timber for building work.

## Concrete and masonry work

A companion Standard to NZS 3604:2011 is *NZS 4229:2013 Concrete masonry buildings not requiring specific engineering design*, which describes methods for the design and construction of concrete masonry in buildings up to three storeys. It should be read in conjunction with Acceptable Solution B1/AS1.

Also being funded are *NZS 3109:1997 Concrete construction*, *NZS 4210:2001 Masonry construction: Materials and workmanship*, *NZS 4230:2004 Design of reinforced concrete masonry structures* and *SNZ HB 4236:2002 Masonry veneer wall cladding*.

## Contract template

When undertaking building work valued at \$30,000 or more, it is mandatory to have a written contract. This is made easier with the template building contract provided by *NZS 3902:2004 Housing, alterations and small buildings contract*.

## Energy efficiency

Another Standard that will continue to be available for free download is *NZS 4218:2009 Thermal insulation – Housing and small buildings*. When read in conjunction with Acceptable Solution H1/AS1, it provides a way of complying with the New Zealand Building Code for the thermal insulation of houses for energy efficiency.

Download these and other funded building Standards on the [Standards New Zealand website \(https://www.standards.govt.nz/sponsored-standards/building-standards/\)](https://www.standards.govt.nz/sponsored-standards/building-standards/).

## Quiz

1. Where can you download free building-related standards?
  - a. standards.govt.nz.
  - b. lbp.govt.nz.
  - c. mbie.govt.nz.
  - d. building.govt.nz
  
2. Why has MBIE funded building-related Standards so they can be downloaded for free?
  - a. Standards are overpriced.
  - b. To reduce the cost of using Standards, so that people are more likely to use them, leading to better outcomes in the construction industry.
  - c. To encourage using the digital versions of Standards.
  
3. How are Standards developed?
  - a. They are dictated by what the government regulates.
  - b. They are developed by expert technical committees.
  - c. They are developed by manufacturers to specify how to use their products.

Check answers (<https://www.building.govt.nz/about-building-performance/news-and-updates/codewords/codewords-issue-92/free-building-standards/quiz-answers-free-building-standards/>)

