

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme

SEPTEMBER 2026



Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)
Hīkina Whakatutuki – Lifting to make successful

MBIE develops and delivers policy, services, advice and regulation to support economic growth and the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

More information

This document is issued as guidance under section 175 of the Building Act 2004.

While MBIE has taken care in preparing the document it should not be relied upon as establishing compliance with all relevant clauses of the Building Act or Building Code in all cases that may arise.

This document may be updated from time to time, and the latest version is available from MBIE's website at www.building.govt.nz.

Information, examples, and answers to your questions about the topics covered here can be found on our website: www.mbie.govt.nz or by calling us free on 0800 24 22 43.

Disclaimer

This document is a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for legislation or legal advice. To the extent permitted by law, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is not responsible for the results of any actions or omissions taken on the basis of information in this document, or for any errors or omissions.

ISBN (online): 978-1-997308-61-4

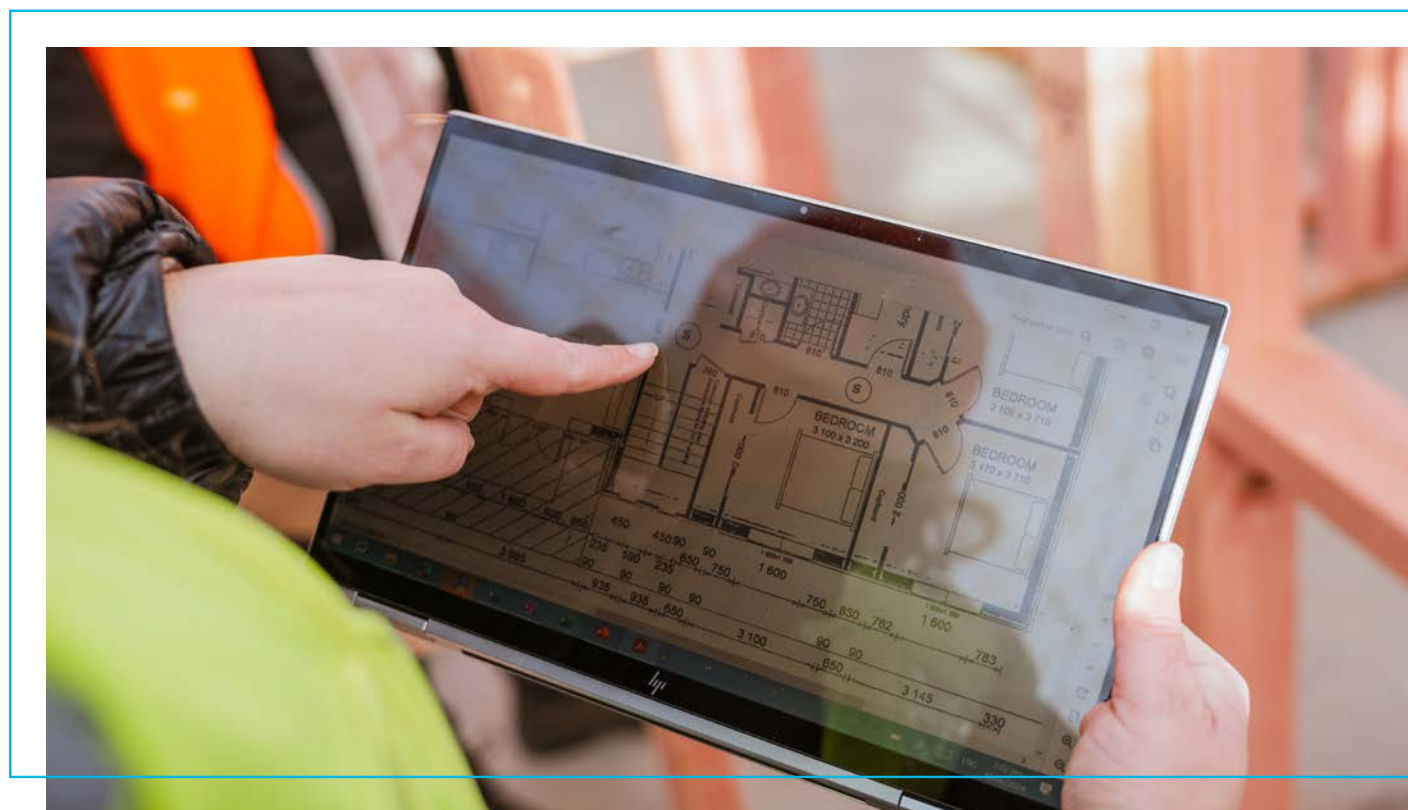
September 2026

©Crown Copyright

The material contained in this report is subject to Crown copyright protection unless otherwise indicated. The Crown copyright protected material may be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission. This is subject to the material being reproduced accurately and not being used in a derogatory manner or in a misleading context. Where the material is being published or issued to others, the source and copyright status should be acknowledged. The permission to reproduce Crown copyright protected material does not extend to any material in this report that is identified as being the copyright of a third party. Authorisation to reproduce such material should be obtained from the copyright holders.

Document status

Document history		
Status	Date published	Alterations
Version 1	7 September 2026	–



Contents

Document status	3
1. Using the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme guidance	6
What is in the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying guidance	7
What is not covered in this guidance	7
Limitations of this guidance	8
Features of this document	8
Who the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying guidance is for	8
2. Background to the self-certification scheme for plumbing and drainlaying	9
What the self-certification scheme for plumbing and drainlaying is for	9
Legislative framework	10
3. Roles and responsibilities	15
Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers	15
The Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board	15
Building consent authorities	16
Designers and other building consent applicants	17
Building owners	17
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)	18
4. What plumbing and drainlaying can be self-certified	19
What qualifies for the scheme (and what doesn't)	20
Common plumbing included in the scheme	21
Common drainlaying included in the scheme	22
On-site systems	22
5. Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying: the building consent process	24
For designers and BCAs	24
Building consent application stage	24
A building consent can include both self-certifiable and non-self-certifiable work	25
For building consent authorities	26
Construction stage	27
Changes after the building consent has been issued	27
Certificates of compliance	31
Code compliance certificates	33
For building consent authorities	33

6. Scenarios for self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying	35
EXAMPLE – Commercial, office fit-out	35
EXAMPLE – Residential, townhouse development	36
EXAMPLE – Residential, new build	37
EXAMPLE – Residential, new build, minor variation	37
EXAMPLE – Commercial, fit-out, fire separation	38
EXAMPLE – Commercial, building consent amendment	38
EXAMPLE – Residential, building consent amendment	38
EXAMPLE – Commercial, building consent amendment	39
EXAMPLE – Commercial, aged care, hybrid building consent	39
EXAMPLE – Commercial, aged care, hybrid building consent	40
EXAMPLE – Commercial, fit-out	40
EXAMPLE – Commercial, re-heat	41
EXAMPLE – Commercial, industrial	41
EXAMPLE – Commercial, industrial	41
EXAMPLE – Residential, rural, alternative solution	42
EXAMPLE – Commercial, fit-out	42
Glossary	43

1. Using the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme guidance

Use this guidance to help understand the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme and its place in the building consent system.



The guidance:

- outlines how the self-certification scheme for plumbing and drainlaying operates
- explains the scope, intent and practical application of the scheme
- helps building consent authorities, plumbers, drainlayers and other participants in the building regulatory system to understand the requirements of the scheme in relation to the building consent process.



What is in the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying guidance

This document is divided into six sections:

Section 1: Using the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying guidance	Introduces the guidance, its scope, and intended audience for self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying.
Section 2: Background to the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme	Provides background to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying, its role in the building consent system, and the policy intent for the scheme.
Section 3: Roles and responsibilities	Explains the legal responsibilities and roles for plumbers, drainlayers, building consent authorities, designers and other building consent applicants, building owners, the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board, and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).
Section 4: What plumbing and drainlaying can be self-certified	Lists common types of plumbing and drainlaying that may be eligible for the scheme.
Section 5: Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying: the building consent system	Explains how self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying slots into the existing building consent process and system, including how to manage design changes, requirements for certificates of compliance, and the code compliance certificate process.
Section 6: Scenarios for self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying	Illustrates scenarios on how self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying works in different situations across building types.

What is not covered in this guidance

The Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board (the Board) sets the requirements and administers self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying.

Because of this, the guidance does not address the process on how to become an endorsed plumber or drainlayer, licensing or registration requirements for plumbers and drainlayers, or the audit system for endorsed plumbers and drainlayers and their issued certificates of compliance. For more information, visit the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board website: www.pgdb.co.nz

Limitations of this guidance

This document is a general guide to support compliance with the Building Act in relation to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying. Where relevant, this guidance provides information on corresponding information about the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act and the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations. While MBIE has taken great care in preparing this guide, it provides guidance only and should not be used to establish all the requirements of the Building Act on its own. Readers must refer to the Building Act, the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act, the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification, Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026 and other relevant notices as their primary source documents.

Depending on the circumstances, you may need to seek legal or other professional advice. MBIE accepts no responsibility for the content of third-party material linked to or referenced in this document.

Features of this document

Hyperlinks are provided to cross-reference within this document and to external websites. These hyperlinks appear with [an underline](#).

This guidance uses terms that have a distinct meaning under the Building Act 2004 (the Building Act), the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 (the PGD Act), and related regulations and notices.

[A glossary is provided to help with these terms near the end of the document.](#)

Who the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying guidance is for

- **building consent authorities (BCAs)** – typically the local council (but not always) or authority that processes and issues building consents and code compliance certificates.
- **plumbers and drainlayers** – practitioners who are licensed and endorsed by the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (the Board) to carry out sanitary plumbing and drainlaying.
- **designers** – Licensed Building Practitioners (design), registered architects, hydraulic engineers and chartered professional engineers.

However, there may be useful information for other participants in the building consent system, such as **building owners** – homeowners or other building owners who want to use self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying.

2. Background to the self-certification scheme for plumbing and drainlaying

The Building and Construction Sector (Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Amendment Act 2026 received Royal Assent on 2 June 2026, with the supporting regulations commencing from 7 July 2026.



The legislation and regulations that define the requirements for the scheme are set out in the following instruments:

- [The Building and Construction Sector \(Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers\) Amendment Act 2026](#)
- [Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers \(Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information\) Regulations 2026](#)
- [Building \(Forms\) Amendment Regulations 2026.](#)
- [Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers \(Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers\) Notice 2026.](#)

What the self-certification scheme for plumbing and drainlaying is for

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying aims to speed up the building consent system by removing building consent authority (BCA) inspections on eligible plumbing and drainlaying.

The scheme allows for endorsed plumbers and drainlayers to certify that eligible plumbing and drainlaying complies with the building consent.

The scheme does not remove the requirement to:

- obtain a building consent, building consent amendments and minor variations where required
- comply with the Building Code
- comply with applicable Acceptable Solutions or Verification Methods
- obtain a code compliance certificate (CCC)
- follow other obligations arising under other legislation.

Plumbing and drainlaying that does not require a building consent isn't eligible for the scheme as exempt work doesn't need to be inspected.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers can self-certify that eligible plumbing and drainlaying work complies with the building consent. Only certifying plumbers and drainlayers can apply for an endorsement with the Board. For more information on how to get endorsed, visit the Board's website: www.pgdb.co.nz

Legislative framework

The *Building and Construction Sector (Self-certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Amendment Act 2026* (the Amendment Act) provides the legislative basis for the self-certification scheme.

The Amendment Act amends both the Building Act 2004 and the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006 and includes key requirements for the scheme.

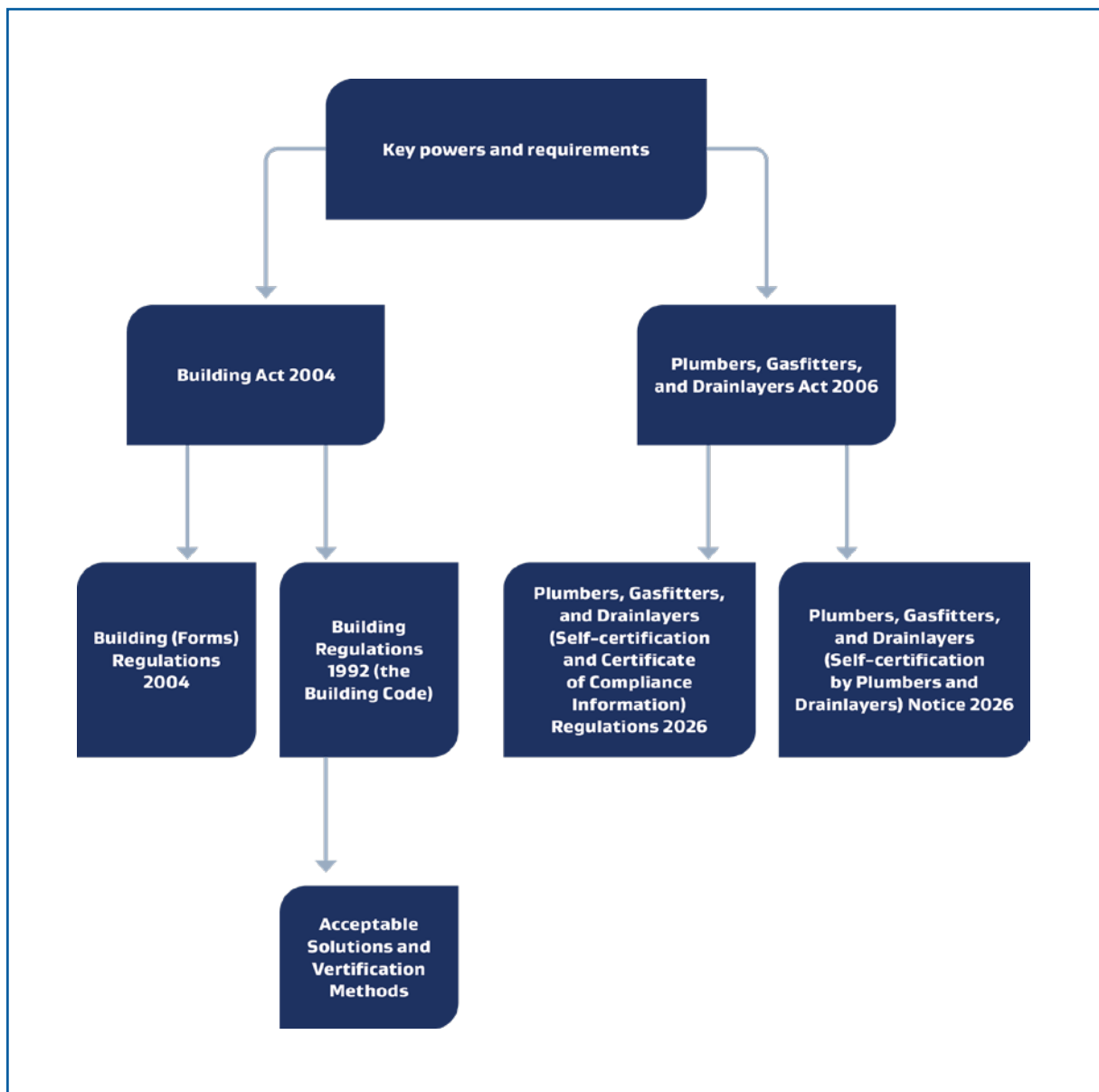


Figure 1: Legislative framework – self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying

Building Act 2004

The amendments to the Building Act establish how self-certification operates within the building consent system.

What the law says:

The Building Act:

- allows plumbing and drainlaying work to be identified as self-certifiable as part of a building consent application
- requires building owners to notify the BCA of the endorsed plumber or drainlayer who will carry out self-certified work, and of any changes of who will carry out the work
- allows endorsed plumbers and drainlayers to self-certify that eligible plumbing and drainlaying complies with the building consent instead of BCA inspections.
- requires certificates of compliance to be provided by the building consent applicant before a code compliance certificate can be issued
- requires BCAs to accept certificates of compliance as evidence that self-certified work complies with the building consent
- requires territorial authorities to keep records of self-certification information
- protects BCAs from liability where they rely in good faith on certificates of compliance issued under the scheme.

Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006

The amendments to the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act establish the self-certification regime for plumbers and drainlayers and the oversight role of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board (the Board).

What the law says:

Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act:

- creates a new self-certification endorsement for licensed plumbers and drainlayers
- requires practitioners to hold an endorsement before they can self-certify eligible work
- empowers the Board to set endorsement requirements, monitor compliance, and undertake audits of endorsed plumbers and drainlayers
- requires endorsed practitioners to issue certificates of compliance for self-certified work and empower the Board to audit these certificates
- establishes a public register of certificates of compliance and self-certification information
- provides monitoring, disciplinary, suspension, cancellation, and enforcement powers relating to self-certification
- creates offences for false or misleading representations about self-certification status or self-certified work.

Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026

The regulations specify what work can be self-certified and the contents of certificates of compliance.

What the law says:

Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026 define:

- self-certifiable plumbing
- self-certifiable drainlaying
- certificate of compliance requirements
- and establish operational requirements for the scheme.

Building (Forms) Amendment Regulations 2026

The amendments to the Building (Forms) Regulations 2004 support operation of the scheme by changing key forms in the building consent system.

What the law says:

For self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying, the Building (Forms) Amendment Regulations 2026 changes include:

- building consent applicants must identify plumbing and/or drainlaying work proposed to be self-certified (form 2)
- BCAs must record self-certifiable work on the issued building consent (form 5)
- certificates of compliance must be provided as part of the CCC process (form 6).

Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-Certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Notice 2026

This notice is made by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board and:

- creates the endorsement to self-certify plumbing and drainlaying
- prescribes the requirements and conditions that apply to self-certification
- authorises endorsed plumbers and drainlayers to self-certify plumbing and drainlaying
- prescribes minimum standards for a practitioner to apply for an endorsement
- prescribes terms and conditions of endorsements
- prescribes the form of a certificate of compliance
- sets the fee and levy for an endorsement.

Relationship with the Building Code

What the law says:

Building Act 2004

17 All building work must comply with building code

All building work must comply with the building code to the extent required by this Act, whether or not a building consent is required in respect of that building work.

Building Regulations 1992

All building work must comply with the requirements of the Building Code. This includes work that is completed under the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme. Self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying must continue to comply with all relevant Building Code clauses.

Relevant primary clauses may include: • E1 Surface water • G1 Personal hygiene • G12 Water supplies • G13 Foul water • G14 Industrial liquid waste. Building Code clauses that directly regulate the design and installation of plumbing and drainlaying work. These are the clauses most commonly used to demonstrate compliance for plumbing and drainlaying systems.	Relevant secondary clauses may include: • B1 Structure • B2 Durability • C Protection from fire • E2 External moisture • E3 Internal moisture • G2 Laundering • G3 Food preparation and prevention of contamination • G5 Interior environment • G6 Airborne and impact sound • G15 Solid waste • H1 Energy efficiency. Building Code clauses that may apply because the plumbing or drainlaying work affects, penetrates, interfaces with, or relies on other building elements. While they are not the main source of plumbing or drainlaying requirements, compliance may still need to be considered.
--	---

Note: secondary clauses (or Building Code clauses that have a relationship with with plumbing and drainlaying) are not direct compliance pathways for self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying. However, plumbing and drainlaying may still be required to meet the requirements with secondary clauses and compliance pathways.

Relationship with other legislation and requirements

What the law says:

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying does not remove the need to comply with other legal requirements.

Examples of related legislation include:

- [Resource Management Act 1991](#), as well as regional and district plans
- [Local Government Act 2002](#)
- [Local Government \(Water Services\) Act 2025](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#).



3. Roles and responsibilities

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying involves different key players from different parts of the building system, each with distinct roles and responsibilities.

While self-certification removes the need for BCA inspections for eligible plumbing and drainlaying, it does not change the fundamental requirement that all building work must comply with the Building Code and all other applicable legislation.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers are central to the operation of the self-certification scheme. They assume responsibility for certifying that eligible work complies with the building consent. They take on the liability for self-certified plumbing and drainlaying and do not share responsibility with BCAs for self-certified work.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers responsibilities relating to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying include:

- holding the appropriate practising licence and a current self-certification endorsement
- complying with all conditions of their endorsement
- only self-certifying work that falls within the definition of self-certifiable plumbing or self-certifiable drainlaying
- carrying out work in accordance with the building consent and all relevant Building Code requirements
- maintaining records required by legislation and Board requirements
- issuing a certificate of compliance for self-certified plumbing or drainlaying in the form prescribed by the Board
 - this must be issued to the building owner, BCA and the Board within 10 working days of completing the work
- providing required information to building owners and BCAs
- cooperating with monitoring, auditing and disciplinary processes undertaken by the Board.

The Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board

The Board is the regulator of licensed plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers and is responsible for administering the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying endorsement regime.

The Board's responsibilities relating to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying include:

- assessing and approving applications for self-certification endorsements
- setting and administering endorsement requirements, fees and levies
- maintaining records and registers required under the legislation
- providing information and training relating to self-certification requirements for plumbers and drainlayers
- monitoring compliance with endorsement requirements and conditions
- conducting audits of self-certified work and associated records
- investigating complaints and concerns about endorsed plumbers and drainlayers relating to licensing, endorsement, and self-certification obligations

- taking disciplinary and enforcement action where appropriate
- suspending, cancelling or imposing conditions on endorsements where required
- ensuring endorsed plumbers and drainlayers participating in the scheme continue to meet the standards required to hold their endorsement.



Read more about the Board's audit and endorsement policies:

- Audit policy: [self-certification-audit-policy.pdf](#)
- Endorsement policy: [self-certification-endorsement-policy.pdf](#)

Building consent authorities

BCAs continue to perform their statutory functions under the Building Act, but they have a modified role for eligible self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying work. This includes 'standalone BCAs' (private entities) that are able to carry out various building control functions under the Building Act.

BCA responsibilities relating to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying include:

- processing building consent applications that include proposed self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying, including building consent amendments and minor variations
- recording self-certifiable work on issued building consents
- maintaining records relating to self-certified work
- receiving certificates of compliance as part of the code compliance certificate (CCC) process
- checking certificates of compliance for completeness and ensuring it was issued by an endorsed plumber and/or drainlayer when deciding whether to issue a CCC
- retaining information relating to self-certified work on property and consent records
- carrying out their normal regulatory and enforcement functions under the Building Act where required, including issuing notices to fix.

BCAs must accept valid certificates of compliance issued by endorsed plumbers and drainlayers as evidence that self-certified work complies with the building consent.

BCAs are not responsible for:

- inspecting plumbing and drainlaying covered by a certificate of compliance to confirm compliance with the building consent
- assuming responsibility for the compliance of self-certified plumbing and drainlaying to the Building Code
- certifying work on behalf of endorsed plumbers and drainlayers.

The responsibility for the compliance of self-certified plumbing and drainlaying rests with the endorsed plumber or drainlayer who issued the certificate of compliance.

BCAs have liability protections where they rely in good faith on certificates of compliance issued by endorsed plumbers and drainlayers.

What the law says:

Building Act 2004

392 Building consent authority not liable

(1) No civil proceedings may be brought against a building consent authority for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith in reliance on any of the following documents or matters:

...

(cb) a certificate of compliance issued by a self-certification endorsed plumber or drainlayer under section 87AD of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006:

Designers and other building consent applicants

Designers and other building consent applicants continue to have the same responsibilities that apply under the Building Act, whether or not plumbing or drainlaying will be self-certified. Designers must:

- prepare plans and specifications that, if properly followed, will result in compliance with the Building Code
- ensure designs adequately identify plumbing and drainlaying work proposed to be self-certified
- coordinate with plumbers, drainlayers and other building professionals as necessary
- ensure that all relevant Building Code requirements are addressed in the design documentation.

Using the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme does not remove the requirement for accurate and complete design documentation or the obligation to comply with all relevant Building Code requirements.

Note: it is recommended to document on the drawings where self-certified plumbing or self-certifiable drainlaying is being proposed.

Building consent applicants are responsible for:

- identifying proposed self-certifiable plumbing and/or drainlaying in the building consent application
- providing information required for the building consent process
- notifying the BCA when they know who the endorsed plumber and/or drainlayer is
- ensuring the appropriate endorsed plumber and/or drainlayer is engaged to undertake self-certified work
- ensuring all required documentation is provided throughout the building consent and CCC process, including a certificate of compliance
- applying for building consent amendments if they no longer want the plumbing and drainlaying to be self-certified.

Building owners

Building owners remain responsible for building work, even when they choose to use self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying.

Self-certification is voluntary. Building owners decide whether to use endorsed plumbers and drainlayers to self-certify eligible plumbing or drainlaying instead of having that work inspected by a BCA. Where a building owner has not opted in for self-certified plumbing and drainlaying, inspections must be carried out by the BCA.

Self-certification does not remove the requirement to obtain a building consent where one is otherwise required, and it does not remove the requirement for building work to comply with the Building Code.

Building owners are responsible for:

- obtaining a building consent where required
- engaging appropriately licensed and, where applicable, self-certification endorsed plumbers and drainlayers
- identifying whether plumbing or drainlaying will be self-certified as part of the building consent process
- notifying the BCA of the endorsed plumber or drainlayer engaged to undertake self-certified plumbing and/or drainlaying, as required by the Building Act, and of any changes of who will carry out the work
- ensuring certificates of compliance are obtained and provided as part of the code compliance certificate (CCC) process
- ensuring compliance with any other applicable legal requirements, including requirements under resource management, local government, water services, and health and safety legislation
- ensuring compliance with any notices to fix issued under the Building Act.

While endorsed plumbers and drainlayers are responsible for certifying that plumbing and drainlaying complies with the building consent, building owners remain ultimately responsible for ensuring that building work carried out on their building complies with the Building Code and the Building Act.

Self-certification does not transfer an owner's responsibilities under the Building Act.

What the law says:

Building Act 2004

14B Responsibilities of owner

An owner is responsible for—

- (a) obtaining any necessary consents, approvals, and certificates:
- (b) ensuring that building work carried out by the owner complies with the building consent or, if there is no building consent, with the [building code](#):
- (c) ensuring compliance with any notices to fix.

Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)

MBIE is the central regulator of New Zealand's building system. It is responsible for supporting the overall performance of the building system by developing and administering building legislation, monitoring system performance, and supporting compliance through education and guidance.

MBIE's responsibilities relating to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying include:

- monitoring and evaluating the operation and performance of the scheme
- developing and maintaining legislation and regulations relating to self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying
- providing guidance, information, tools and resources to support scheme participants
- issuing determinations under the Building Act to resolve disputes and clarify how legislation applies in particular circumstances
- monitoring the performance of the building regulatory system and the impacts of self-certification on that system.

4. What plumbing and drainlaying can be self-certified

In order to use self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying, all plumbing and drainlaying must be designed and built in accordance with an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method, unless it is for an on-site system that does not have an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method.

See our guide to determine whether plumbing and drainlaying can be self-certified.

Determine whether your plumbing and drainlaying can be self-certified

What qualifies for the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme (and what doesn't)

Plumbing and drainlaying that can be self-certified is set out in the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026 (the self-certification regulations).

[Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers \(Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information\) Regulations 2026](#) | [New Zealand Legislation](#)

Follow the steps below to determine which the types of plumbing and drainlaying can be self-certified by an endorsed plumber or drainlayer.

1

Determine whether the building is in scope

The building is a qualifying building if it:

- is three storeys or less
- does not contain apartments.

- ⊗ If either requirement is not met, the work is not self-certifiable.
- ✓ If the building meets both requirements, proceed to step 2.

2

Confirm the work is plumbing or drainlaying

The work must fall within the statutory definitions of sanitary plumbing or drainlaying in the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006. Civil works that are a part of the public network or network utility operator do not apply.

- ✓ If the plumbing and drainlaying work needs a building consent, proceed to step 3.
- ⊗ If the plumbing and drainlaying doesn't need a building consent, the work is not eligible for the scheme.

4

Determine whether there is an applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method to show compliance with the Building Code

Common compliance pathways include:

- B2/AS1
- G12/AS1, G12/AS2 and G12/AS3
- G12/VM1
- G13/AS1, G13/AS2 and G13/AS3
- G13/VM1 and G13/VM4
- G14/VM1.

- ✓ If yes, proceed to step 5.
- ⊗ If no, proceed to step 6.

3

Determine whether the work is specifically excluded

Certain plumbing and drainlaying is excluded under the scheme.

Examples include:

- plumbing penetrating fire separations
- plumbing in a common wall
- work outside the legislative definition
- alternative solutions (except on qualifying on-site systems).

If the work is not specifically excluded, the plumbing or drainlaying work can be self-certified.

Note: Where plumbing and drainlaying work is completed in stages or under separate building consents, some work may be eligible for self-certification while other work may not be. Even where work is eligible, it may not be proposed for self-certification and may instead follow the usual BCA inspection process.

Where the plumbing or drainlaying work doesn't fully meet the requirements of the nominated Acceptable Solution or Verification Method, the work may be self-certified up to the point where it deviates from the Acceptable Solution or Verification Method.

This should be made clear to the BCA through the building consent drawings, schematics, and specifications.

- ⊗ If the work is excluded, the work is not self-certifiable.
- ✓ If the work is not specifically excluded, proceed to step 4.

5

Confirm that the work is designed according to the applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method

If an applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method exists, the work must be designed in accordance with it to be eligible for self-certification.

Designers and building consent applicants ensure that the proposed self-certifiable plumbing/self-certifiable drainlaying is designed according to the applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method.

Building consent authorities check to make sure the proposed self-certifiable plumbing/self-certifiable drainlaying is designed according to the applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers only self-certify plumbing and drainlaying designed according to the applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method (unless it's a qualifying on-site system).

This can be demonstrated through the applicant Form 2, drawings, schematics and specifications.

- ✓ If yes, the work can be self-certified.
- ⊗ If no, proceed to step 6.

6

Determine if the work qualifies for the on-site system exception

On-site systems may remain self-certifiable where:

- they satisfy the legislative definition of an on-site system
- no applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method exists
- they meet the performance requirements of the applicable Building Code clause.

An on-site system means a system for the independent management of water that does not connect to a network utility operator (NUO) system. This includes systems for circulating, disposing of, storing, supplying, pumping or re-using water, as well as irrigation.

Alternative solutions: [Alternative solutions](#) | [Building Performance](#)

Common plumbing included in the scheme

The scheme is intended to cover many types of plumbing work commonly undertaken in residential and commercial buildings where a building consent is required.

Examples of plumbing work that may be eligible for self-certification include:

- sinks and basins
- showers and baths
- toilets and sanitary fixtures
- laundry fixtures
- hose taps
- domestic hot water systems
- other kitchen fixtures
- water supply systems
- sanitary plumbing systems.

Many of these installations are routinely designed and constructed using established Building Code compliance pathways.

Residential plumbing

Examples of typical residential plumbing work include:

- water supply pipework
- sanitary plumbing fixtures
- domestic hot water systems
- piping and fixtures for kitchen and laundry installations
- bathroom plumbing installations.

Commercial plumbing

Examples of typical commercial plumbing work include:

- staff amenities
- office kitchens
- circulating hot water systems
- commercial kitchen services
- grease management systems
- commercial and emergency showers
- boosted water supply systems
- toilet blocks
- end of trip facilities.

Common drainlaying included in the scheme

The scheme also includes many common forms of residential and commercial drainlaying.

Residential drainlaying

Examples of residential drainlaying work include:

- household foul water drainage
- stormwater drainage
- drainage connected to network utility operator (NUO) systems
- on-site wastewater systems
- drainage associated with detached dwellings.

Commercial drainlaying

Examples of commercial drainlaying work include:

- commercial stormwater systems
- commercial wastewater systems
- grease trap systems, treatment tank or other item of equipment*
- industrial liquid waste drainage systems.

* Drainlaying associated with an NUO-approved connection may be self-certifiable. The work may be self-certifiable drainlaying if it:

- is covered by the building consent
- meets the statutory definition of self-certifiable drainlaying
- meets all other applicable requirements (does not include civil drainage works).



To be eligible for self-certification, all plumbing and drainlaying must be designed in accordance with an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method, unless it is an on-site system without an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method.

On-site systems

On-site systems require particular care with self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying. If an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method exists for the on-site system, it must be designed to one. However, if an on-site system does not have an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method available, it does not need to be designed to one.



An on-site system means a system for the independent management of water that does not connect to a network utility operator (NUO) system. This includes systems for circulating, disposing of, storing, supplying, pumping or re-using water, as well as irrigation.

On-site systems designed to an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method

Some on-site systems may be designed in accordance with an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method and may be eligible for self-certification where they satisfy all legislative requirements.

Examples include:

- on-site wastewater treatment systems
- greywater plumbing and drainlaying systems
- potable water storage systems
- charged stormwater systems
- circulating hot water systems
- pumped wastewater systems
- irrigation systems
- heat pump hot water systems.

Tanks themselves are not necessarily sanitary plumbing or drainlaying. The connections to a tank, pump, treatment unit, or other system may be within the scope of self-certification.

On-site systems with no Acceptable Solution or Verification Method

Some on-site systems do not have an applicable Acceptable Solution or Verification Method. These can be self-certified using a different compliance method like an alternative solution.

Examples include:

- proprietary systems such as sewage pumping stations and greywater systems
- stormwater retention tanks
- stormwater detention tanks
- pumped stormwater systems.

These systems are the primary category where the on-site system exception may apply.

Specified systems

Specified systems are covered under the scheme so long as they are done in accordance with an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method, or where an on-site system is being installed that requires a specified system.



In practice, testable backflow prevention devices that are medium or high risk are the only plumbing and drainlaying related specified systems under the scheme. All other specified systems are outside the scope of plumbing and drainlaying work.

5. Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying: the building consent process

Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying changes how eligible plumbing and drainlaying work is inspected and certified, but it does not change the overall building consent process. BCAs remain responsible for administering building consents and code compliance certificates, while endorsed plumbers and drainlayers take responsibility for certifying eligible work within the scope of the scheme.

The following sections explain how self-certification interacts with each stage of the building consent process.

For designers and BCAs

Building consent application stage

Applications for building consent must clearly identify any plumbing or drainlaying work proposed to be self-certified.

This information is provided through the building consent application form and should also be clearly reflected in the supporting plans and specifications. Good quality documentation is important because it helps the applicant, designers, practitioners and BCAs understand which work is proposed to be self-certified and which work will remain subject to normal inspection requirements.

Applications should clearly describe:

- the plumbing and drainlaying proposed to be self-certified
- whether the work is self-certifiable plumbing, self-certifiable drainlaying, or both
- the relevant Building Code compliance pathways, including Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods
- the proposed scope of work shown on plans and specifications.



Self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying must be clearly identified in the building consent application, plans and specifications.

Good quality documentation helps ensure all parties understand what building work will be self-certified and what building work will remain subject to BCA inspections.

A building consent can include both self-certifiable and non-self-certifiable work

A building consent may include both:

- self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying
- plumbing and drainlaying that requires normal BCA inspections.

For the purposes of this guidance, we refer to them as **hybrid building consents**.

For example, a project may include plumbing that falls within the definition of self-certifiable plumbing, while other plumbing work on the same project falls outside the scope of the scheme and remains subject to inspections.

Look at scenarios relevant to hybrid building consents:

- [EXAMPLE – Commercial, aged care, hybrid building consent](#)
- [EXAMPLE – Commercial, aged care, hybrid building consent](#)

The inclusion of self-certifiable work does not automatically make all plumbing or drainlaying work on a project eligible for self-certification.

The building owner can also choose to have eligible plumbing and drainlaying inspected by the BCA instead of being self-certified by an endorsed plumber or drainlayer.



Best practice

Plans and specifications should clearly identify:

- the proposed self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying
- the applicable compliance pathways
- the demarcation between self-certified and inspected building work.

Clear documentation reduces uncertainty during construction and helps support the code compliance certificate process.

Identifying the endorsed plumber and/or drainlayer

The endorsed plumber or drainlayer does not need to be known when the building consent application is submitted. However, if the endorsed plumber or drainlayer is known at the time of the building consent application, it needs to state the name of the endorsed plumber or drainlayer that will do, assist in doing, or supervise the self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying.

The owner (or their agent) must notify the BCA of the endorsed plumber or drainlayer who will undertake or supervise that work before building work begins.

It is possible that multiple endorsed plumbers and drainlayers can be certifying work across one building consent. In that situation, each endorsed plumber or drainlayer would be certifying different parts of the work as complying with the building consent.

Each endorsed plumber and drainlayer should only issue a certificate of compliance for self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying they did, assisted in doing, or supervised. Issuing a certificate of compliance means the endorsed plumber/endorsed drainlayers takes responsibility for the compliance with the building consent.

Clear demarcation is particularly important where multiple endorsed plumbers and drainlayers are involved. The building owner (or their agent) should ensure this is reflected in the plans and specifications.

If self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying is not identified as part of the building consent process, normal BCA inspections apply.

What the law says:

Building Act 2004

45 How to apply for building consent

...

(bd) if the building work includes self-certifiable plumbing or self-certifiable drainlaying work (whether or not the building work includes other sanitary plumbing or drainlaying) and the applicant wishes to rely on section 94(2)(aa),—

- (i) state that the applicant wishes to rely on section 94(2)(aa); and
- (ii) state the name of each self-certification endorsed plumber or drainlayer who will do, assist in doing, or supervise the self-certifiable plumbing or self-certifiable drainlaying work that is the subject of the application (if they are engaged at the time of the application); and

For building consent authorities

Processing building consents

BCAs remain responsible for assessing building consent applications against the requirements of the Building Code and determining whether a building consent should be granted.

When assessing an application that includes proposed self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying work, the BCA will:

- assess the building work for compliance with the Building Code
- review the information provided by the applicant relating to the proposed self-certifiable work
- determine whether the identified plumbing and drainlaying falls within the types of work allowed to be self-certified under the scheme.

The assessment focuses on the proposed building work and compliance with the Building Code. Self-certification does not reduce the level of information required to support a building consent application.

Applicants and designers should ensure plans, specifications and supporting documents are complete and clearly identify the proposed self-certifiable work.

Clear annotation and demarcation of plans and specifications is particularly important where a project includes both self-certifiable and non-self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying.

Issuing the building consent

If a building consent is granted, any authorised self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying must be recorded on the issued building consent.

The issued building consent will identify:

- plumbing authorised to be self-certified
- drainlaying authorised to be self-certified.

This information provides certainty to the owner, endorsed plumbers and drainlayers, and the BCA about which work may be certified under the scheme.

Any plumbing or drainlaying work not identified as self-certifiable on the issued building consent remains subject to the usual BCA inspections.

Building owners, designers and endorsed plumbers and drainlayers should review the issued building consent carefully to ensure the authorised self-certifiable work accurately reflects the approved design.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers are certifying that self-certified plumbing and drainlaying complies with the building consent.



Only plumbing and drainlaying identified as self-certifiable on the issued building consent may be certified under the scheme.

Any plumbing and drainlaying not identified as self-certifiable remains subject to normal inspection requirements.

Construction stage

During construction, endorsed plumbers and drainlayers remain responsible for ensuring that self-certified work complies with:

- the building consent
- the Building Code
- the terms of their endorsement and registration by the Board.

Self-certification replaces BCA inspections for eligible work. It does not replace the plumber or drainlayer's professional responsibility, as well as liability, for the work.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers remain responsible for:

- carrying out or supervising the work
- undertaking required testing and verification
- quality assurance activities
- maintaining records
- collecting supporting information
- ensuring the completed work matches the approved building consent.

The endorsed plumber or drainlayer certifies that the completed work complies with the building consent. This means they must be satisfied that appropriate checks, testing and quality assurance processes have been completed before issuing a certificate of compliance, with the supporting documentation.

Changes after the building consent has been issued

Changes sometimes occur during construction. Where a proposed change affects self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying, endorsed plumbers and drainlayers should identify the issue early and discuss it with the owner or their agent (such as the main contractor).

If the change affects the approved design, compliance pathway, or scope of self-certifiable work, a minor variation or building consent amendment may be required before the building work can start.

Although the owner is responsible for obtaining any required approvals, endorsed plumbers and drainlayers play an important role in identifying when a proposed change may affect compliance with the building consent or when the change falls outside the scope of self-certification.

Under self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying, it's important to ensure that no changes are made before getting approval from the BCA or without the building owner's consent.



Self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying does not create a separate process for managing design changes. Minor variations and building consent amendments must continue to be managed through the existing Building Act framework.

Minor variations

A minor variation is a small change to an issued building consent that does not materially affect compliance with the Building Code.

Minor variations should be managed in accordance with:

- the Building Act 2004
- the Building (Minor Variations) Regulations 2009.

In many cases, a minor variation may be identified during construction and discussed with a BCA inspector. However, BCAs may also assess minor variations outside the inspection process.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers can discuss minor variations with the building inspector onsite. If there is none (especially since the plumbing and drainlaying will have a self-certification element), talk to the owner or their agent, like the main contractor, about applying for a minor variation.

Look at scenarios relevant to minor variations:

- [EXAMPLE – Residential, new build, minor variation.](#)



For more information on minor variations, look at our guidance on the Building Performance website: [Minor variations guidance](#) | [Building Performance](#)

Building consent amendments

Where a change goes beyond the scope of a minor variation, a building consent amendment may be required.

Examples may include:

- significant design changes
- changes to compliance pathways
- introduction of alternative solutions
- changes that introduce non-self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying
- changes that introduce additional self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying.

The owner remains responsible for obtaining any required amendment to the building consent, although an agent may act on the owner's behalf. The endorsed plumber or drainlayer should let the owner or their agent know if the proposed changes in the work are likely to require an amendment to the building consent. Construction should stop until a building consent amendment has been issued.

The process is the same to amend the building consent as it is to obtain a building consent in the first place.

Look at scenarios relevant to building consent amendments:

- [EXAMPLE – Commercial, building consent amendment](#)
- [EXAMPLE – Residential, building consent amendment](#)
- [EXAMPLE – Commercial, building consent amendment](#).



For more information on building consent amendments, look at our guidance on the Building Performance website: [Amendments guidance](#) | [Building Performance](#)

Effects of changes on self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying

Changes to the consented plans may affect the eligibility of the plumbing or drainlaying for self-certification.

If a change causes plumbing or drainlaying to fall outside the definition of self-certifiable plumbing or self-certifiable drainlaying, the work is no longer eligible. This means the plumbing or drainlaying becomes subject to the usual BCA inspections.

The building owner, the BCA and the endorsed plumber or drainlayer will need to agree how the changed work will be inspected and documented, especially if the work has already been completed or concealed.

Where building work requiring consent has been completed without a building consent, or outside the scope of a granted building consent, the building owner may need to apply to the territorial authority for a certificate of acceptance. The owner may authorise an agent to apply on their behalf.

The applicant should discuss with the territorial authority the process required before applying for the certificate of acceptance.

What the law says:

Building Act 2004

96 Territorial authority may issue certificate of acceptance in certain circumstances

- (1) A territorial authority may, on application, issue a certificate of acceptance for building work already done—
 - (a) if—
 - (i) the work was done by the owner or any predecessor in title of the owner; and
 - (ii) a building consent was required for the work but not obtained; or
 - (b) if [section 42](#) (which relates to building work that had to be carried out urgently) applies; or
 - (c) if subsections (3) and (4) of [section 91](#) (which apply if a building consent authority that is not a territorial authority or a regional authority is unable or refuses to issue a code compliance certificate in relation to building work for which it granted a building consent) apply.
- (2) A territorial authority may issue a certificate of acceptance only if it is satisfied, to the best of its knowledge and belief and on reasonable grounds, that, insofar as it could ascertain, the building work complies with the [building code](#).
- (3) Subsection (1)—
 - (a) does not limit [section 40](#) (which provides that a person must not carry out any building work except in accordance with a building consent); and
 - (b) accordingly, does not relieve a person from the requirement to obtain a building consent for building work.
- (4) However, if a certificate of acceptance for any work is issued under [section 99](#), it is not necessary for any person to apply for a building consent in respect of that work.



For more information on certificates of acceptance, visit the Building Performance website: [Certificates of Acceptance | Building Performance](#)

A code compliance certificate can be issued only for building work carried out under the building consent.

Certificates of compliance



A certificate of compliance is not a replacement for the code compliance certificate.
The building owner must still apply for a code compliance certificate where one is required.

A certificate of compliance is the formal record that self-certifiable plumbing or drainlaying has been completed according to the building consent.

The certificate of compliance and supporting documentation is issued by the endorsed plumber or drainlayer.

It replaces BCA inspections for the plumbing and/or drainlaying that is listed as self-certifiable on the issued building consent. It also provides statements and supporting documentation that the endorsed plumber or drainlayer has completed the necessary checks, testing and verification required.

When issuing a certificate of compliance, the endorsed plumber or drainlayer accepts responsibility for the plumbing and/or drainlaying identified on their certificate. One end-of-job inspection by the endorsed plumber or drainlayer is not sufficient where work is concealed at different stages.

[Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers \(Self-Certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers\) Notice 2026](#)

In-person inspection

Endorsed practitioners will be required to attend the site and inspect the work in person before issuing a CoC if the work has been carried out under their supervision. This requirement is necessary to make sure that the endorsed practitioner takes direct responsibility for the work they certify and that certification is based on first-hand knowledge of the work rather than photographs, videos, or third-party reports.

The certification of work is not a simply box-ticking exercise at the end of the job. Endorsed practitioners will need to take active steps on site to check that the work complies with the building consent and all requirements before certifying it.

What must be included in a certificate of compliance

The following information must be included in the certificate of compliance issued by the endorsed plumber or drainlayer:

About the work

- Where the work was carried out (for example, the address)
- What work was completed
- The building consent number
- When the work started and finished
- Any required supporting documents showing the work complies with the building consent.

About the endorsed plumber or drainlayer

- Their name and registration (or unique ID)
- Confirmation they are approved to self-certify
- Confirmation they carried out or supervised the work.

About other people involved

- Names (and IDs if available) of anyone else who did or helped with the work

Statements about the work

- Tests were carried out at the required stages (for example, pressure, temperature or flood tests)
- The tests show the work performs as required
- The work complies with the building consent
- All required supporting information is included.

Final sign-off

- A statement that everything in the certificate is true and accurate
- Dated signature by the endorsed plumber or drainlayer.

Supporting documents that must be included

- Photos of the work
- Test details and results
- “As-built” plans if the work differs from the building consent (or an explanation of the differences).

BCAs may still inspect other parts of the building work, as well as work that is not eligible for self-certification.

There may be situations where some parts of the building work are self-certifiable and other parts are not, within the same building consent.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers are required by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act to give the owner, the BCA, and the Board a copy of the certificate of compliance within ten working days. In practice, this is an online form the endorsed plumber or drainlayer completes that then issues the certificate of compliance.

The Board holds the responsibility for auditing and monitoring certificates of compliance by endorsed plumbers and drainlayers, as well as ensuring they continue to follow the conditions of that endorsement.

The certificate of compliance must also be included in the application for code compliance certificate (CCC).

What the law says:

Building Act 2004

Section 92 Application for code compliance certificate

- (1) An owner must apply to a building consent authority for a code compliance certificate after all building work to be carried out under a building consent granted to that owner is completed.
- ...
- (3B) The application under subsection (1) must be accompanied by a certificate of compliance issued by a self-certification endorsed plumber or drainlayer, and any prescribed supporting documents, if the application for the applicable building consent relied on [section 45\(1\)\(bd\)](#).

Code compliance certificates

The certificate of compliance forms part of the application for a CCC.

When issuing a certificate of compliance, the endorsed plumber or drainlayer accepts responsibility for the plumbing and/or drainlaying identified on their certificate.

The application for code compliance certificate must include certificates of compliance (and the required supporting information) for all self-certified plumbing and drainlaying.

BCAs remain responsible for deciding whether to issue or refuse a CCC.

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers are required by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act to give the owner, the BCA, and the Board a copy of the certificate of compliance within ten working days. This is a condition of their endorsement to self-certify.

What the law says:

BCAs must accept a certificate of compliance as evidence of compliance with the building consent when included in an application for code compliance certificate.

Building Act 2004

94 Matters for consideration by building consent authority in deciding issue of code compliance certificate

- (1) A building consent authority must issue a code compliance certificate if it is satisfied, on reasonable grounds,—
 - (a) that the building work complies with the building consent; and
- ...
- (2) In deciding whether to issue a code compliance certificate, a building consent authority—
 - (aa) must accept a certificate of compliance issued by a self-certification endorsed plumber or drainlayer in relation to self-certifiable plumbing or self-certifiable drainlaying work as establishing that the work to which the certificate applies complies with the building consent; and

For building consent authorities

What BCAs check

BCAs should check if the certificate of compliance includes the required information and if it's in the prescribed form for the Board. In practice, this is an online form the endorsed plumber or drainlayer completes that then issues the certificate of compliance.

Public register for plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers: [Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board](#)

This is a completeness check rather than a technical Building Code assessment of the certified work. BCAs should also check that the certifying plumber or drainlayer held a current endorsement from the Board when the work was completed. BCAs must accept the certificate of compliance – for plumbing and drainlaying covered in the building consent – as establishing compliance with the building consent.

Hybrid building consents

Some projects will contain both self-certified work and work subject to normal inspections.

In these situations:

- self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying is evidenced through certificates of compliance and accompanying documentation
- non-self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying remains subject to normal inspection processes
- both streams of information contribute to the BCA's consideration of the CCC application.

The use of self-certification for some parts of a project does not remove the BCA's ability to inspect other building work that remains outside the scope of the scheme.

Dealing with non-compliance with the Building Code

If BCAs happen to see self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying that does not comply with the requirements of the Building Code, they should first contact the endorsed plumber or drainlayer. If the non-compliance is still not dealt with, the BCA may issue a notice to fix.

The mechanisms for issuing a notice to fix have not changed.

Standalone BCAs (that aren't territorial authorities), are required to supply a copy of the notice to fix to the relevant territorial authority within five working days. Before enforcement action is taken, the territorial authority must agree on the enforcement action.



For more information on issuing notices to fix, visit the Building Performance website:

[Issuing notices to fix | Building Performance](#)

Endorsed plumbers and drainlayers may show how they remedied non-compliance with the Building Code in their certificate of compliance.

6. Scenarios for self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying

The following scenarios cover both residential and commercial work under the scheme. They also cover the scenarios such as minor variations, building consent amendments, and hybrid building consents.

These scenarios are for illustrative purposes to help understand how self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying may be applied. The list is not exhaustive and other scenarios may be possible. Where questions arise, talk with your BCA to confirm whether your project meets the requirement for self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, office fit-out

Self-certifiable plumbing

A fit-out is being completed for a new commercial office building, which is three storeys tall.

The building consent lists the following work that will be self-certified by an endorsed plumber:

- a staff kitchenette with a sink, hot and cold water supply, a boiling-water tap, a dishwasher and a wash-hand basin that requires tempered water.
- toilet facilities with toilets and handwashing basins.

The sanitary plumbing services are largely contained within each floor, but some wastewater and vent pipework passes through fire-separated risers servicing the upper storeys of the building.

The wastewater and vent pipework is subject to the usual BCA inspections, and plumbing that goes through a fire separation cannot be self-certified.

The plumbing that is intended to be self-certified is clearly identified and annotated to demarcate what is being self-certified and what is going through usual building consent authority inspections.

The plumbing is completed by plumbers onsite that the endorsed plumber is supervising. After the endorsed plumber checks that all the plumbing work is up to standard and complies with the building consent, as well as runs all the relevant testing required, they fill out the certificate of compliance online with the supporting documents.

They send this to the main contractor to include in the application for code compliance certificate, as the main contractor is acting as agent for the building owner. They also provide this to the BCA and the Board.

EXAMPLE – Residential, new build

Self-certifiable plumbing, self-certifiable drainlaying

A builder is constructing a new single-storey dwelling. The plumbing work includes a kitchen, bathroom, laundry, external garden taps, and hot and cold water services throughout the house. Drainage work includes wastewater and stormwater pipework beneath the slab and an overflow relief gully located outside the building – a soakage device also sits outside the building envelope. The builder has also installed downpipes connected to the stormwater drainage system.

The builder intends to use self-certification for both the plumbing and the drainlaying work. The builder decides to use an endorsed plumber and an endorsed drainlayer, listing their names and registration numbers, as well as the proposed plumbing and drainlaying work intended to be self-certified, on the application for building consent.

Since the dwelling is single storey, the work is designed to the relevant Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods, and the work does not separate a fire penetration, the proposed building work meets the definition of self-certifiable plumbing and is not subject to building consent authority inspections.

The endorsed plumber is only responsible for the work listed on the issued building consent as 'self-certifiable plumbing', and the endorsed drainlayer is only responsible for work listed on the issued building consent as 'self-certifiable drainlaying.'

Once the work is completed and the appropriate tests have been finished, each endorsed plumber and drainlayer issues a certificate of compliance with the supporting documentation for the portion of the work they self-certified, returned to the main contractor acting as the homeowner's agent.

There are two certificates of compliance that need to be included in the application for code compliance certificate, covering the work that was certified as complying with the building consent and within the scope of their endorsement (the endorsed drainlayer responsible for self-certifiable drainlaying, and the endorsed plumber responsible for self-certifiable plumbing).

Note: connection to the authority's system outside of the property boundary is outside the scope of self-certification.

EXAMPLE – Residential, townhouse development

Self-certifiable plumbing, self-certifiable drainlaying

A developer is constructing four connected townhouses. Each townhouse contains its own kitchen, bathroom, laundry, external hose taps, and dedicated hot and cold water services. Wastewater and stormwater drainage is provided below ground, with downpipes connected to the drainage system. The developer intends to use an endorsed practitioner who holds both endorsements to carry out plumbing and drainlaying across the site.

During design, the project team considers whether each townhouse should have its own wastewater stack or whether multiple units should share common stacks before connecting to the drainage network outside the building.

If they decide to use common stacks, with connecting units in each intertenancy wall, then the plumbing work would fall outside of the scope of the self-certification scheme.

However, if they designed it so each townhouse used individual stacks with the sanitary pipework meeting outside of the intertenancy wall outside of the building, then the plumbing work would fall within the scope of self-certification.

The developer goes with the latter option to fully utilise the self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying scheme and reduce the amount of inspections required for the project to be more efficient and deliver the project quicker.

EXAMPLE – Residential, new build

Self-certifiable plumbing, self-certifiable drainlaying

A new dwelling is being constructed on a concrete slab foundation.

The following work is listed on the building consent as both self-certifiable drainlaying and self-certified plumbing:

- Plumbers to install pre-slab sanitary pipework intended for future connection to kitchen, bathroom, and laundry fixtures.
- Drainlayers to install the foul water and stormwater drainage system. The drainlayer to connect the foul water drainage to the pre-slab sanitary system installed by the plumber. The drainlayer to connect the drains through to the approved outfall for the respective drains.

This work falls into the definition of self-certifiable plumbing, as well as self-certifiable drainlaying.

Although, the plumbing pre-slab sanitary system was undertaken before the concrete slab is poured, the foul water and stormwater drainage was able to be completed at a later date, as this was outside the building envelope.

A practitioner with both endorsements (self-certified plumbing and self-certified drainlaying) supervises the plumbing and drainlaying carried out by staff under their supervision. The endorsed practitioner goes on-site to verify the completed plumbing and drainlaying work. They inspect all the work, run the appropriate tests, and once ensured, then issue a certificate of compliance that the work complies with the building consent.

EXAMPLE – Residential, new build, minor variation

Self-certifiable drainlaying

A consented residential development includes a straight foul water drain running from the dwelling to the connection point at the property boundary. The issued building consent lists the proposed work that will be self-certifiable drainlaying. When excavation begins, the drainlayer discovers a large rock directly in the path of the proposed drain. Removing the rock would require substantial excavation equipment that is not available on site.

Instead, the drainlayer proposes a slight change in alignment that routes the drain around the obstruction while maintaining equivalent compliance with the relevant Building Code performance requirements.

The building inspector on site, who is there for a foundation inspection, assesses the change, notes that it is a minor variation and approves it, and this is captured in the as-built by the drainlayer as a minor variation.

The endorsed drainlayer issues a certificate of compliance with the required documentation, including the as-built that shows the change from the completed drawings.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, fit-out, fire separation

Self-certifiable plumbing

During an alteration to an existing office building, an endorsed plumber begins installing new water supply and sanitary pipework in accordance with the issued building consent. Once wall linings are removed, the plumber discovers an unexpected structural beam and several electrical cable trays occupying the intended pipe route. To complete the installation, the plumber proposes a small adjustment to the pipe alignment while ensuring the system remains compliant with the approved design and Building Code requirements.

The inspector, onsite to inspect pipework that penetrates a fire separation that is not eligible for the scheme, talks to the endorsed plumber, stating the change will require a building consent amendment, which the owner or their agent needs to apply for.

The endorsed plumber pauses work until the building consent amendment is granted.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, building consent amendment

Self-certifiable plumbing

An endorsed plumber is installing new water supply and sanitary pipework as part of a commercial building alteration. During construction, the plumber identifies that the most practical route for the pipework would require it to pass through a fire separation.

The change would not qualify for a minor variation, and the endorsed plumber contacts the main contractor to inform them that they need to apply for a building consent amendment. Because the proposed change is outside the scope of the scheme (requiring the pipework to pass through the fire separation), this part of the plumbing work would be subject to normal BCA inspection regimes.

The endorsed plumber pauses work until the building consent amendment is granted.

EXAMPLE – Residential, building consent amendment

Self-certifiable drainlaying

A drainlayer is installing a new stormwater drainage system for a residential property. Due to the old foundations, the drain must follow a longer route than originally designed because it can't make the invert for a gravity drainage system.

The drainlayer proposes a bubble up system – however, because this is beyond the scope of a minor variation, the drainlayer needs to wait until the building consent applicant submits a building consent amendment before changing the work and self-certifying it.

Once the change has been assessed by the building consent authority, and they issue an amended building consent, the endorsed drainlayer can install the bubble-up system and certify that the work complies with the building consent.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, building consent amendment

Self-certifiable drainlaying

As part of a commercial building project, with the building at two storeys height, new toilets are being connected to an existing drainage system. The approved plans indicate sufficient fall from the fixtures to the branch drain, which can be self-certified by an endorsed drainlayer. However, once excavation is completed, the drainlayer discovers that the existing drain is positioned higher than shown on the drawings. The fall means the toilets can no longer discharge by gravity.

The change in design does not qualify for a minor variation, and the building consent applicant must apply for a building consent amendment. The endorsed drainlayer recommends installing a pump to discharge wastewater into the branch drain.

The applicant applies for a building consent amendment detailing the change. Once the BCA approves the design change, the endorsed drainlayer installs it in accordance with the building consent, as well as the plans and specifications, and issues a certificate of compliance with the accompanying documentation to certify that the work complies with the building consent.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, aged care, hybrid building consent

Self-certifiable drainlaying

A single-storey private aged care hospital is being constructed. The facility includes patient rooms, treatment areas, and dirty utility rooms used for cleaning bedpans and medical equipment.

The plumbing system includes bedpan washers that discharge high-temperature wastewater. Hot and cold water services, plumbing fixtures, drainage systems, and backflow prevention devices are all part of the design.

Below-ground drainage serves the building, while water supply pipework extends through corridors and multiple fire-separated spaces.

After talking to their agent, XY&Z Build, the building owner of the soon-to-be-constructed private aged care hospital decides they want the drainlaying to be self-certified.

Since the plumbing has many stages of pipework that passes through fire walls, they decide it would be simpler for plumbing to be subject to the usual BCA inspections.

XY&Z Build details their intention for the drainlaying work to be self-certifiable on their application for building consent.

The building control officer (BCO) checks that the proposed work complies with the Building Code, meets the definition for self-certifiable drainlaying, and that the building matches the criteria for work that can be self-certified.

Once the BCO is satisfied on reasonable grounds of the above, the self-certifiable drainlaying work is listed on the issued building consent.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, aged care, hybrid building consent

Self-certifiable plumbing

A single-storey assisted living facility is altering several ground-floor resident rooms. The building owner decides they want to use an endorsed plumber to lower the amount of inspections for the project so that it's completed sooner.

Through their agent, they apply for building consent, with the following work to be self-certified:

- Each room, which contains an ensuite with a toilet, basin, and accessible walk-in shower fitted with grab rails. The ensuite facilities are located within individual fire-separated rooms.

The project also includes modifications to hot and cold water connections serving the ensuites. This work penetrates fire separations in between each room, and it is not eligible for self-certification. The agent does not list this as proposed to be self-certified.

The BCO checks that the proposed work complies with the Building Code, meets the definition for self-certifiable plumbing, and that the building matches the criteria for work that can be self-certified.

Once the BCO is satisfied on reasonable grounds of the above, the self-certifiable plumbing work is listed on the issued building consent.

The modifications to hot and cold water connections will be subject to usual BCA inspections.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, fit-out

Self-certifiable plumbing

A new café is being established on the ground floor within an existing commercial building that is three storeys tall. The fit-out includes the installation of sinks, wash-hand basins, a commercial dishwasher, and steam ovens requiring both water supply and wastewater connections.

Wastewater from cooking operations is directed through grease management equipment before entering the drainage system.

The building consent application includes the associated plumbing and drainage work required to service the café kitchen.

As the fit out is within one fire cell, the building consent applicant lists all of the above plumbing work as intended to be self-certified.

The BCO checks that the proposed work complies with the Building Code, meets the definition for self-certifiable plumbing, and that the building matches the criteria for work that can be self-certified.

Once the BCO is satisfied on reasonable grounds of the above, the self-certifiable plumbing work is listed on the issued building consent.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, re-heat

Self-certifiable plumbing

A new warehouse building includes amenities for warehouse staff. The staff smoko room contains a kitchenette with a sink, hot and cold water supply, boiling-water tap, and dishwasher.

Additional plumbing fixtures include nearby toilet and handwashing facilities. Downpipes, water services, and drainage systems form part of the wider warehouse project.

All the above work is listed on the building consent as self-certifiable plumbing.

The plumbing work is completed by plumbers onsite that the endorsed plumber is supervising.

After the endorsed plumber checks that all the plumbing work is up to standard and complies with the building consent, as well as runs all the relevant testing required, they fill out the certificate of compliance with the supporting documents. They send this to the main contractor to include in the application for code compliance certificate, as the main contractor is acting as agent for the building owner, as well as the BCA and the Board.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, industrial

Self-certifiable drainlaying

A new mechanic's workshop is being constructed to service vehicles and plant equipment.

The drainlaying work intended to be self-certified includes wash-down facilities and wastewater systems designed to manage contaminants generated by the workshop's activities. Drainage infrastructure includes treatment systems intended to capture petroleum products and other contaminants before discharge.

Water supply and plumbing fixtures are also provided throughout the workshop.

The work, which is listed on the building consent as both self-certifiable plumbing and self-certifiable drainlaying, is completed by a practitioner who holds both endorsements.

They complete the work in accordance with the building consent, and they issue a certificate of compliance certifying the work complies with the building consent, with the accompanying documentation.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, industrial

Self-certifiable plumbing

An existing industrial building is being converted into a film production studio. The studio will include a workshop area where paint brushes and equipment are washed after use.

For this part of the plumbing work, the main contractor plans to use an endorsed plumber. The building consent lists that the work will include a set-up where wastewater from the wash-up sink flows to a settlement tank designed to capture solids before discharge. Overflow from the settlement tank is connected to the building's foul water drainage system as part of a trade waste installation associated with the building alteration.

The endorsed plumber completes this work as detailed by the building consent, then issues a certificate of compliance with the accompanying documentation to the main contractor, the BCA, the Board and the building owner.

EXAMPLE – Residential, rural, alternative solution

Self-certifiable plumbing

Bob is building a new bach on a coastal rural property that is not connected to a council water supply, although it does connect to the council wastewater network. To provide water to the dwelling, the design includes an above-ground rainwater harvesting tank that collects water from the roof. The harvested water is then filtered and treated before being supplied to the kitchen, bathroom, laundry, and outdoor taps.

Bob hires an endorsed plumber to install the rainwater harvesting system. The roof drainage and pipework conveying water to the storage tank are designed in accordance with E1/AS1, and the potable water pipework downstream of the treatment system is designed in accordance with G12/AS1.

As part of the building consent application, Bob indicates that he intends to use self-certification for the rainwater harvesting system to reduce the number of council inspections required during construction. The remainder of the plumbing and drainlaying work will continue to be inspected through the normal building consent process.

The BCO reviews the proposal and notes that while the collection of rainwater and the potable water supply pipework are designed using the relevant Acceptable Solutions, the treatment process that converts the harvested water from non-potable to potable water is not specifically covered by an Acceptable Solution or Verification Method and is therefore proposed as an alternative solution.

The BCO determines that the rainwater harvesting system is eligible for self-certification, with the exception that filtration system to harvest water from non-potable to potable is subject to BCA inspections.

EXAMPLE – Commercial, fit-out

Self-certifiable plumbing

A three-storey boutique hotel is undergoing alterations to install a new commercial laundry facility for guest linen and housekeeping operations. The laundry fit-out includes several commercial washing machines that are connected to the building's potable water supply and wastewater system.

The washing machines do not contain integral backflow prevention devices. To protect the building's drinking water supply, the design includes the installation of a backflow prevention device on the water supply serving the laundry equipment. The water supply system has been designed in accordance with the applicable requirements of G12/AS1 and G12/AS3.

The hotel owner, through their agent, engages an endorsed plumber to carry out the installation and would like the backflow prevention work to be self-certified so that fewer building consent inspections are required during construction.

When reviewing the building consent application, the BCO notes that the building is three storeys in height and that the work involves modifications to the building's water supply system, including the installation of a backflow prevention device serving commercial equipment.

The BCO determines the proposed work meets the requirements for self-certifiable plumbing and issues the building consent outlining what work will be self-certified.

Glossary

Term	Description
Acceptable Solution	gives specific construction details, often for commonly used building materials, systems and methods. Designs based on Acceptable Solutions must be accepted by BCAs as demonstrating compliance with the Building Code.
Alternative solution	all or part of a building design that demonstrates compliance with the Building Code, but differs completely or partially from the Acceptable Solutions or Verification Methods.
Apartments	an apartment block that contains units stacked on top of one another, as defined by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026.
Building	a temporary or permanent structure, whether fixed in place or movable. This includes houses, commercial buildings, garages, sheds and many other structures covered by the Building Act, sections 8 and 9.
Building consent	a formal approval issued by a building consent authority that allows building work to begin in accordance with approved plans and specifications.
Building Code	the Building Regulations 1992 made under the Building Act 2004 that set the performance standards that buildings must meet. It covers matters such as structural stability, durability, fire safety, access, moisture control, services and facilities, and energy efficiency.
Building consent amendment	a change to the plans, specifications or building consent of what a building consent was granted for. An amendment must be approved before the changed work is carried out and follows the same process as a building consent application.
Building consent authority (BCA)	an accredited organisation, usually a territorial authority (council) or a private organisation, that performs statutory building control functions under the Building Act 2004, including issuing building consents and code compliance certificates.
Building Act 2004	the primary legislation governing building work in New Zealand. It provides the framework for regulating building work, the building consent system, and compliance with the Building Code.
Building (Forms) Regulations 2004	regulations made under the Building Act 2004 that prescribe forms used for building control processes such as applications, certificates, notices and compliance documents.
Building owner	the person who owns the building and/or land and is ultimately responsible for ensuring building work complies with the Building Act and Building Code, including obtaining any required building consent and code compliance certificate.
Building work	work involved in constructing, altering, repairing, extending, demolishing or removing a building, including associated site work. Building work must comply with the Building Code, even when a building consent is not required.

Certificate of acceptance	a statement issued by a building consent authority for building work carried out without a building consent (where one was required) or where a code compliance certificate cannot be issued in certain circumstances.
Certificate of compliance	a certificate, with accompanying documentation, issued by an endorsed plumber or drainlayer that certifies that sanitary plumbing or drainlaying complies with the building consent (and in accordance with the plans and specifications).
Civil works	infrastructure and site works associated with land development, such as earthworks, retaining structures, roads, paths, stormwater systems, water supply networks and other services outside a building.
Code compliance certificate (CCC)	a formal statement issued by a building consent authority confirming that building work carried out under a building consent complies with that building consent.
Common wall	a wall between two buildings (or parts of a building) that is shared by adjoining occupancies or owners.
Designer	Licensed Building Practitioner (design), registered architect, hydraulic engineer or chartered professional engineer.
Drainlayer	a practitioner who is licensed by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Board (the Board) to carry out drainlaying.
Drainlaying	work as defined in the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006.
Endorsed plumber	a practitioner who is licensed by the Board who holds a self-certification endorsement under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006.
Endorsed drainlayer	a drainlayer registered and licensed by the Board who holds a self-certification endorsement under the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006.
Fire separation	a wall designed to prevent or restrict the spread of fire from one part of a building to another or from one property to another.
Hybrid building consent	for the purposes of this guidance, a building consent that has a mix of self-certifiable plumbing and/or drainlaying, as well as plumbing and/or drainlaying subject to the usual BCA inspections.
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment	the government agency responsible for administering the building regulatory system, including the Building Act 2004 and the New Zealand Building Code.
Minor variation	a minor modification to building work approved under an existing building consent that does not substantially deviate from the approved plans and specifications and can be approved by the BCA without a formal amendment.
Network utility operator (NUO)	an entity listed under Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 that operates infrastructure networks such as electricity, gas, telecommunications, water, wastewater, rail or roads.
Notice to fix	a formal notice issued by a responsible authority requiring a person to remedy non-compliance with the Building Act 2004 or the Building Code.

On-site system	a wastewater disposal system located on the property it serves, such as a septic tank system.
Plumber	practitioner who is registered and licensed by the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (the Board) to carry out sanitary plumbing.
Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006	the legislation that regulates people who carry out plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying work in New Zealand and establishes the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board.
Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026	the regulations that define self-certifiable plumbing, self-certifiable drainlaying, as well as prescribes requirements for certificates of compliance.
Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board	the regulatory body responsible for licensing, registration, competence, disciplinary functions and oversight of plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.
Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-Certification by Plumbers and Drainlayers) Notice 2026	the notice that establishes the self-certification scheme and related requirements for endorsed plumbers and drainlayers.
Proprietary system	a building system, product or method that is designed and supplied by a specific manufacturer or supplier and is intended to be installed and used in accordance with that manufacturer's specifications.
Sanitary plumbing	work as defined in section 6 of the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 2006.
Self-certifiable plumbing	sanitary plumbing that can be self-certified by an endorsed plumber, as defined by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026.
Self-certifiable drainlaying	drainlayer that can be self-certified by an endorsed drainlayer, as defined by the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers (Self-certification and Certificate of Compliance Information) Regulations 2026.
Specified system	a system in a building that contributes to the ongoing safety and health of occupants and requires inspection, maintenance and reporting under a compliance schedule. For self-certification for plumbing and drainlaying, this includes backflow prevention devices.
Territorial authority	city council, district council or regional council established under the Local Government Act 2002 with building control and other local government responsibilities.
Verification Method	Verification methods are tests or calculation methods that prescribe one way to comply with the Building Code.



New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa