

## CONSISTENT KEY MESSAGES

# Licensed building professionals: Granny flats building consent exemption

JANUARY 2026

To provide clear, consistent messages for licensed building professionals to use in public and client communications about the granny flats building consent exemption under the Building Act 2004.

### What is the granny flats exemption?

- › The granny flats exemption allows certain new, single-storey, standalone dwellings up to 70 square metres to be built without a building consent, provided all exemption conditions are met and the work is carried out or supervised by licensed building professionals.
- › All building work under the exemption must comply with the New Zealand Building Code.

### Role and responsibilities of licensed building professionals

#### Licensed building professionals are responsible for:

- › ensuring all design and building work complies with the Building Code and meets the exemption conditions
- › carrying out or supervising all restricted building work on granny flats built under the exemption
- › providing homeowners with all required documentation
- › starting building work only once a project information memorandum (PIM) has been issued to a homeowner.

#### Licensed building professionals are not responsible for:

- › confirming or guaranteeing that the project is exempt – responsibility for compliance remains with the homeowner
- › inspecting or approving work on behalf of the council.

### Key conditions of the exemption

- › The dwelling must be:
  - new, standalone and single-storey
  - no more than 70 square metres in floor area (including any internal garage)
  - two metres or more from any other residential building or legal boundary
  - built using lightweight steel or timber framing and lightweight roof cladding
  - wall claddings with a maximum weight of 220 kilograms per square metre
  - connected to network utility operator (NUO) systems where available, or have compliant on-site systems
  - not contain a level-entry shower requiring a waterproof membrane
  - designed and built (or supervised) by licensed building professionals
- › all plumbing, drainage, electrical and gas work must be carried out by appropriately licensed building professionals and certified as required
- › the build must be completed within two years of the PIM being issued – extensions may be granted by the council before the two-year period lapses.

## Documentation and certification

- › LBP designers must provide a Certificate of Work (CoW) for the design of restricted building work to the homeowner.
- › Builders/LBPs must provide a Record of Work (RoW) for all restricted building work carried out or supervised to the homeowner and the council.
- › Plumbers/drainlayers must provide a RoW for prescribed sanitary plumbing and drainlaying to the homeowner.
- › Electrical workers/gasfitters must provide certificates of compliance and safety certificates for all prescribed work to the homeowner.
- › Once all documentation has been received by the homeowner, they must provide these to the council that issued the PIM within 20 working days, as the home is considered complete at that point.

## Consumer protection and contracts

- › For work costing \$30,000 or more (including GST) or if a homeowner requests it, licensed building professionals must provide them a written contract, disclosure statement and standard checklist for residential building work.
- › Implied warranties and a mandatory defect repair period apply to all residential building work, regardless of whether a building consent is required.

## Enforcement and non-compliance

- › Licensed building professionals who fail to provide required certificates and records may face disciplinary action by their registration board.
- › Building work that does not meet exemption conditions and is carried out without a building consent is an offence under the Building Act and may result in prosecution, fines (up to \$200,000 plus \$10,000 per day for continuing offences), and enforcement action.

## Consistent public messages

- › “The granny flats exemption allows certain small, standalone dwellings to be built without a building consent, provided all conditions are met and licensed building professionals are used.”
- › “Licensed building professionals must ensure all work complies with the Building Code and exemption conditions and provide all required documentation to the homeowner and the Record(s) of Work to the council.”
- › “Homeowners must submit all required documentation to the council within 20 working days of completion.”
- › “If the exemption conditions are not met, a building consent is required. Non-compliance may result in enforcement action against the homeowner and/or the licensed building professional responsible for the work.”
- › “For more information, visit [building.govt.nz](https://building.govt.nz)”

## Where to find more information

- › [building.govt.nz/grannyflats](https://building.govt.nz/grannyflats)
- › [environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/national-direction](https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/national-direction)
- › [licensed building practitioner \(LBP\) register – lbp.govt.nz](https://lbp.govt.nz)
- › [plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers register – pgdb.co.nz](https://pgdb.co.nz)
- › [electrical workers register – kete.mbie.govt.nz/EW/EWPRSearch](https://kete.mbie.govt.nz/EW/EWPRSearch)
- › [New Zealand architects register – nzrab.nz](https://nzbarchitects.org.nz)
- › [Chartered Professional Engineer database – engineeringnz.org](https://engineeringnz.org)