

How the Building Code works

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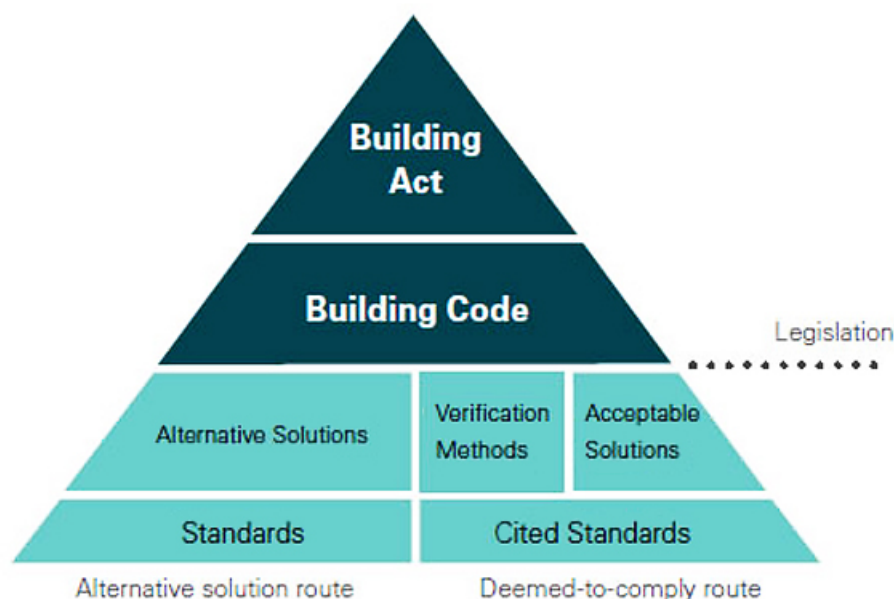
All building work in New Zealand must meet the performance standards of the Building Code, even if it doesn't require a consent.

The Building Code sets clear expectations of the standards buildings should meet. It covers aspects such as structural stability, fire safety, access, moisture control, durability, services and facilities, and energy efficiency.

The Building Code states how a building must perform in its intended use rather than describing how the building must be designed and constructed. In other words, it is a performance-based Building Code.

Where the Building Code sits

The building regulatory system sets out a framework to promote good quality decisions being made during the building process. The legislation and regulation work together as the building regulatory system.



Structure of the Building Code

The Building Code consists of three general clauses and 38 technical clauses. Within each technical clause the requirements are explained in three levels:

- Objective - social objectives from the Building Act

- Functional requirement - functions the building must perform to meet the Objective

Performance - the performance criteria the building must achieve. By meeting the performance criteria, the Objective and Functional requirement can be achieved.

Clauses are grouped and described by a letter and number, for example:

- B Stability
 - B1 Structure
 - B2 Durability

The exception is for the Protection from Fire clauses, clauses C1 - C6, which are set out differently.

You can get a copy of the Building Code on the [New Zealand Legislation website](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0150/latest/DLM162576.html) (<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/1992/0150/latest/DLM162576.html>)

The Building Code is contained in Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations 1992.

General clauses

Classifications

When reading the Building Code, refer to the A clauses for general classifications. Clause A1 lists seven classified uses for buildings:

- housing
- communal
- residential
- communal non-residential
- commercial
- industrial
- outbuilding
- ancillary

The categories are used to identify where parts of the Building Code apply (the 'limits on application'). A building with a given classified use may have one or more 'intended uses', this is set out in section 7 of the Act.

[Building Code compliance](https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/) (<https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/>) lists all the Building Code clauses.

Limits on application

Alongside the Objective, Functional Requirement and Performance given for each Building Code clause, there is a note of any 'limits on application' (limits on where the clause can be applied).

For example, Functional Requirement D1.2.1 says "Buildings shall be provided with reasonable and adequate access to enable safe and easy movement of people" and the Limits on Application says "Requirement D1.2.1 shall not apply to Ancillary Buildings or Outbuildings".

Definitions

The Building Act 2004, Building Code, related regulations and also the Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods provide definitions.

Sections 7 – 10 of the Building Act provide for 'Interpretation' and are the primary source of definitions. For example, the Act sets out the meaning of "building work" and what constitutes a "building".

[The Building Code handbook](https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/building-code-and-handbooks/building-code-handbook/) (<https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/building-code-and-handbooks/building-code-handbook/>) has a summary list of definitions for you to view.

[Different ways to comply with the Building Code](https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/how-the-building-code-works/different-ways-to-comply/) (<https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/how-the-building-code-works/different-ways-to-comply/>) has further information.

Development of the Building Code

To ensure the Building Code continues to set appropriate minimum standards for the performance of New Zealand's buildings, we seek to improve it and the Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods that support it.

When we make changes to the Building Code, or to the Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods, we undertake consultation first. You can keep up with any consultations or amendments by [signing up for our news and updates \(https://www.building.govt.nz/about-building-performance/news-and-updates/subscribe-old/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/about-building-performance/news-and-updates/subscribe-old/).

Online versions of the Building Code, Acceptable Solutions and Verification Methods are up to date. Check any printed copies against the online versions to see if they are superseded. Each new version tracks the amendments and lists the changes.

Find Acceptable Solutions, Verification Methods, updates and technical guidance by Building Code clause in [Building Code compliance \(https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/building-code-compliance/).

Building Act review

When the Building Act took effect in 2004, it introduced a review of the Building Code. The review took place in stages in consultation with industry, government and consumer representatives. The review included:

- research into and consultation on content and structure (to mid-2006)
- work on and consulting on setting performance requirements (2006-2007)
- reporting to the Minister with recommendations for changes to the Building Code and decisions by the government (2007-2008). In mid-2008 the then government agreed to a staged approach for implementing the recommended changes.

Visit the MBIE Corporate website (<http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/building-construction/legislative-other-reviews/past-work-and-older-topics/history-of-changes-to-the-building-act/changes-to-the-building-act-in-2005/further-changes-from-2005-onwards/building-code-changes/?searchterm=building%20code%2A>) to read more about the ongoing development of the Building Code.

Read the Building Act (<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2004/0072/latest/DLM306036.html>) on the Legislation website.



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HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

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- with compliance with the Building Act, it is published under section 175 of the Building Act
- with a Weathertight Services claim, it is published under section 12 of the Weathertight Homes Resolution Services Act 2006.