

Latest building consent news from Selwyn

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Welcome to 2022!

It remains very busy out there, which you will need to take into account with planning your projects.

Our team are raring to go in what will no doubt be another busy year.

In this newsletter we want to update you on our timeframes, ensuring we get your feedback, minor variations and amendments, dealing more efficiently with RFIs, along with updates from MBIE.

Missed an issue of our newsletter? The good news is that copies are available on our website. Check them out here - [Selwyn District Council - Newsletters](#)

Building consent timeframes

Selwyn continues to see a building boom with [a record number of new homes](#) approved by the team in 2021, along with other residential and commercial projects.

What's the current situation?

- Our team are continuing to work through the backlog of applications received last year
- The average number of working days to process applications have reduced from their peak last year
- Our six trainees employed last year have completed their intensive training and are actively processing consents
- Recruitment is continuing for new staff and contractors to help with our workload
- We'll see a large bubble of work in February as applications received over the statutory close down period all go through our system in one go
- To help manage our workload please ensure that s223 has been approved for your project location before you submit your PIM or building consent application, as we are unable to process these consents without this approval

Building inspections

A reminder that our inspectors will only visit sites if you have your QR code handy (visible and easily accessible) for the inspector to scan as they get onsite

If no QR code is in place, no inspection will be carried out.



You are legally required to display an NZ Covid tracer QR code for each location – which you can get from the [Ministry of Health website](#)

In addition we expect the following to be observed on site:

- Maintaining of social distancing at all times
- No handling of document on site – all required documents must be uploaded to the AlphaOne portal
- An up to date site register that is able to be filled in by the inspector.

You can stay in touch with our current situation [via our website](#).

We want your feedback (please)

How was your experience with your building consent or code compliance certificate?

At issue of BC and CCC at the bottom of the email you'll receive a link to a very quick survey. It should take less than 5 minutes of your time to complete.

Your feedback on each consent you're involved in is extremely valuable to us, so please take the time to complete the survey each time.

We use your feedback to

- gauge how well we are carrying out our functions,
- give us an indication of what we may need to review, and
- help us make any necessary improvement to our overall customer service.

Thank you!

Minor variations and amendments for your projects

We know that the shortage of building products across the country, and internationally, is posing problems with being able to build to the consented documents.

In addition, we're aware that it's not always clear whether a minor variation on site is sufficient or if you need to put in a formal amendment. Here are some tips for you:

- Your inspection report should be quite clear on this, and if it's not, ask the inspector
- We've developed some guidance on whether the change can be made via a minor variation or if a formal amendment is needed – see [our website](#)
- To help with efficiency, make sure you use the right process for the changes to your build
- Unsure of how to apply for a formal amendment? – see [our website](#)

Responding to requests for further information

In an RFI situation the 20 working day statutory clock is stopped. It only restarts the day after we have received **sufficient information** from the RFI to make a decision that the work you propose is compliant or not with the building code.

We KNOW the pressure is on - so to help make processing of your consent more efficient

- provide ALL your responses to an RFI in ONE go,
- only provide the changed pages, not the entire set of documents, and
- only use AlphaOne email (eg 21XXXX@sdc.abcs.co.nz) for your responses.

The ability to respond to RFIs online (ie portal communications) in AlphaOne has been turned off.

Why have we done this?

The reason for this is change is to

- help both you and us manage information coming in more efficiently by having it come in via one way only,
- avoid messages getting lost and creating delays and frustration, and
- help us keep more accurate track of the statutory clock.

Clarification on swimming pool barriers

We've made some amendments to our information on swimming pool barriers on our website.

The key changes are:

- All information is in [one place](#) now
- Added an example of what to consider if you have a 1200mm high pool barrier that has a junction with a boundary fence
- That a sign on the inside of the building adjacent to the door advising the door must be kept closed applies only to commercial properties (eg motels, hotels, hostels, etc).

Property flooding potential

Most of us are aware that we live on a big floodplain. This means land and homes in the district tend to be at risk of flooding from rivers, local runoff or coastal inundation.

When a building consent application is submitted for a new building or alteration, our role is to assess the likelihood of flooding of the land not entering buildings. We assess this

- using [mapping](#) available to us showing previous flooding along with areas that may be susceptible to inundation, and
- factoring in all other legislation, including the proposed District Plan which has a consideration for properties identified in a 1:200 year flood event.

If your property is identified as subject to flooding:

- You may be asked to provide a [Flood Hazard Assessment](#) with your consent application
- A building consent will still be granted if we decide that your proposed work will not accelerate, worsen or result in a natural hazard on your or other property
- A section 73 (s73) notification will be registered on the property title via Land Information New Zealand (LINZ).

How does a s73 notification affect the property?

- It warns future property owners that there is a flooding hazard, and
- It may affect
 - the value of the property,
 - EQC insurance cover, and
 - personal insurance cover over the property.

More information on what to consider when [building on land subject to natural hazards](#) is available on our website.

Tiny home guidance

New tiny house guidance has been developed by MBIE around what rules apply and what requirements to consider before building a tiny house - [Tiny House Guidance \(building.govt.nz\)](#).

It has been developed in consultation with a tiny house stakeholder group to support a consistent approach to issuing building consents for tiny houses across each region of New Zealand.

No legislative or regulatory changes have been made.

The guidance

- seeks to clarify any ambiguity on which rules apply to which tiny houses, particularly for tiny houses on wheels, and
- provides detail on these definitions along with considerations to help determine if a tiny house is a building or a vehicle, or both a building and a vehicle, and which relevant laws they need to comply with.

Building for climate change

The world is changing...and we're all going to have to adapt.

In New Zealand our building industry is a high polluter. The challenge for the industry is how we

- reduce emissions during construction and operation, and
- ensure our buildings are resilient enough to withstand changing climate conditions.

A big job?

You betcha!

But Government is preparing to take on this challenge through the [Building for Climate Change programme](#) via the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). The aim is to make New Zealand's buildings

- use as little energy and water as practical,
- warmer, drier and better ventilated, and
- healthier places for us all to work and live.

This will redefine building as we currently know it. Some companies are already taking some good initiatives on this path and it will be interesting to see where as a country we end up in 2050.

If you're interested in keeping up to date make sure you subscribe to [MBIE's email list](#).