

Latest building consent news from Selwyn

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Holiday season closedown

Now is a good time to plan for the holiday season. Our closing and reopening dates are:

Inspections

- Last full day of inspections – Thursday 21 December 2023
- Inspections resume - Wednesday 3 January 2024.

Note: reduced inspection numbers may apply dependant on available resource to allow for our team to have a break too. This is not normally an issue at the time of year given most builders and trades take leave at this time.

We'll be back to regular inspection bookings again for bookings made from Thursday 11 January onwards.

Office

- Office closes – 5.00pm Friday 22 December 2023
- Office reopens – 8.30am Wednesday 3 January 2024.

Remember the processing statutory clock stops on 20 December 2023 and restarts again on 10 January 2024 in accordance with the definition of 'working day' under the Building Act 2004.

This does not mean that we don't work on lodged applications, just that the days don't count as working days. Customers can continue to submit applications 24/7 as normal.

[Update on our workload](#)

Inspection timeframes

Our inspections are currently around 48 hours timeframe from booking. Please note that some days this timeframe may expand out as we head into the busy holiday season.

Processing timeframes

At the end of October:

- The average working days for building consents being issued is 12 days (note this is an average).
- 87% of applications were processed within 20 working days.
- New commercial consents are being processed generally within 22 working days.

Note that timeframes depend on the quality of your application, and over the next couple of months may be impacted by implementation of the flood assessment certificate requirements.

[Residential buildings with specific engineering design](#)

The residential processing team are seeing an increase in complex building structures requiring specific engineering design (SED). These projects are forwarded for specialist input (SI) to undertake a desktop review and comment on compliance with the building code clause B1.

If you're submitting complex construction for a residential dwelling we'd encourage you to set up a pre-application meeting. This:

- allows one of our residential senior Building Surveyor and/or Team Leader Residential to discuss any concerns regarding B1 SED designs with the applicant, and
- will ensure the applicant understands the specialist input (SI) process for the consent and the time frames to be considered for the specialist input.

To arrange a pre-application meeting email [contact us](#) or call 0800 SELWYN. More information on [pre-application meetings](#) is available on our website.

Amendment levy charges

Please be aware that when you submit an amendment to a consent, that you may need to pay additional building levies.

The legislation requires that any increase (or decrease) in the estimated value of work for an amendment be added to the original estimated value of work for the original consent. This is to determine if further levies are due to be paid for the amendment.

The estimated value of building work needs to be an accurate estimate and consider all actual costs, including any additional materials or labour provided free of charge to the project.

How does the calculation of building levy on an amendment work?

Bob and Jane were issued a building consent for their new home. After the consent was granted they decided to change the cladding on their home, increasing the value of building work by \$20,000.

They apply for an amendment to their original building consent. Their building levy payable is recalculated taking into account the original amount of the estimated building work as below:

Total estimated original value of building work	\$600,000
Amendment to original building consent - increase	\$20,000 (a)
Total of every \$1000 of building work (or part of)	20 (b)
Rate of building levy	\$1.75 (c)
Total amount of building levy to be paid by applicant	\$35.00 (= b x c)

More information on the [building levy](#) is available on MBIE's Building Performance website.

Site fencing

With the wind gusts that we have been experiencing recently it's important that you're monitoring your building sites to make sure that the site fencing has not blown over, and materials are secure on site.

To keep people safe and avoid unwanted wandering onto sites, please ensure your teams are checking sites regularly after heavy winds and being mindful of weather forecasts to prepare sites for predicted events.

Interconnected smoke alarms transition period

There is a 12 month transition from November 2023 to have interconnected smoke alarms as the minimum fire safety system in new household units (interconnected means that, when one alarm is activated, all of

them will sound).

Key things to note (information courtesy of BRANZ):

- Alarms must be in all bedrooms, living spaces, hallways and landings (Figure 1) and on each level of a multi-level home within 10m of each other in any direction.
- An alarm suitable for kitchens (which may be a heat alarm) must be installed in the kitchen where a kitchen is separated from living spaces and hallways by closable doors.
- There are very specific requirements about the locations where alarms must be mounted and also recommendations around where they should not be located to avoid nuisance alarms.
- Alarms can be hard wired or operated with a long-life (minimum 10-year) sealed and non-removable battery; with hard wired alarms tested and certified by a licensed electrical worker.
- Interconnection between the alarms can be wired or wireless, and they can be incorporated into a security system.
- Alarms with long-life batteries must be replaced by the manufacturer's replacement date or when the indicator shows low battery, whichever comes first. All other alarms must be replaced 10 years after the date of manufacture unless the manufacturer's instructions state otherwise.

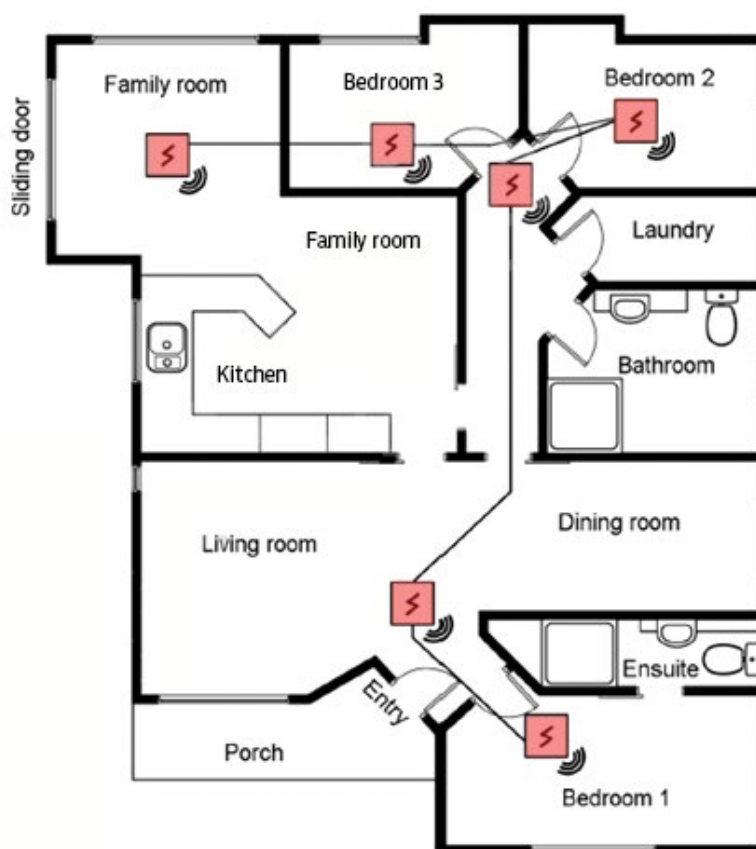


Figure 1. Example of interconnected smoke alarms in a 3-bedroom house from NZS 4514:2021.

The amended C/AS1 and C/AS2 will cite NZS 4514:2021 [Interconnected smoke alarms for houses](#) for their installation, while F7/AS1 and the Verification Method are also being amended.

Reminder of your responsibilities

Both the **owner** and **builder** are responsible under the Building Act to ensure that “the building work complies with the building consent and the plans and specifications to which the building consent relates”.

Yet when things go wrong everyone turns to us first...

Below are some of the issues we have seen recently, along with the consequences.

Issue	Consequences
Window and door configurations being changed during the build	<p>resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non compliance of natural ventilation where opening sizes have been reduced to the point that windows no longer provide sufficient ventilation to habitable spaces • building owner unable to use the property for rental purposes due to not meeting the healthy homes regulations • delays in property sale due to purchasers doing their due diligence and identifying the issue.
Exterior cladding – change in products installed on site during the build	<p>resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-compliance of installation where compatibility of building wrap has not been taken into account • different weathertightness detailing and inspections not being arranged at critical times for different cladding types
Use of second-hand materials	<p>resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-compliance with the approved plans – remember all materials are deemed to be new unless stated otherwise in the approved building consent • potential durability issues if we cannot be satisfied the products will meet the minimum durability requirements of the building code

Unauthorised changes can have far reaching consequences.

Frequently owners are unaware of changes, and we find ourselves in the position of trying to sort out the problems.

All too often this results in

- delays in code compliance decisions, and
- carries the risk of the code compliance certificate for the build being refused or enforcement action being taken to resolve matters.

All this adds time and cost which could be easily avoided by ensuring you get the correct approvals for any changes before proceeding with the related work.

See our information on [Amendments and Variations](#) to ensure your project success.

More hazard information on LIMs

The new law on sharing natural hazard information on a land information memorandum (LIM) provided by a council that will come into effect in 2025 means you are likely to have more detailed information about the natural hazards applying to a property.

Amendments to the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 have introduced:

- a requirement for regional councils to share with city and district councils information they have on natural hazards (including climate change hazards)
- specific requirements for councils around adding “understandable information” on natural hazards to LIMs
- a new limitation of liability that protects councils when they add natural hazard information to LIMs.

This information means that homeowners buying a property (and architects and designers designing a building for the property) will be better informed about potential hazard risks before planning activities on the property.

MBIE updates

Building Code compliance changes coming next month

There are a number of updates to Building Code clauses during November. Some of these apply immediately, while others have a transition period

- There will be a 12 month transition period ending November 2024 for the amended Acceptable Solutions C/AS1, C/AS2, F7/AS1 and Verification Method C/VM2. These changes seek to improve

the safety of people from fire, with interconnected smoke alarms becoming the minimum fire safety system in household units.

- A 12 month transition period from November 2023 also applies for the maximum hot water temperature delivered at the tap of personal hygiene fixtures in housing and certain other types of building. The changes reduce the maximum temperature from 55°C to 50°C, with additional temperature control devices included to give plumbers more ways to limit water temperatures.
- There is also a 12 month transition period for the new Acceptable Solution G12/AS3 citing AS/NZS 3500.1:2021 Plumbing and drainage – Part 1: Water services and AS/NZS 3500.4:2021 Plumbing and drainage – Part 4: Heated water services as a means of demonstrating compliance.
- There is no transition period for the deemed-to-comply pathway for the design of supports for hollow-core floor systems removed from B1/VM1.

Natural hazards guidance for building consent authorities

[The Natural hazards guidance document](#) has been developed for building consent authorities considering building work on land subject to natural hazards with a focus on flooding.

This publication may be of interest to building owners and their designers.

Glossary of te reo Māori building terms

Māori are active participants across all areas of the building and construction industry. MBIE have developed an agree list of [te reo Māori translated terms](#) used in the building system for inclusion within the building regulatory system to promote equity and inclusivity.

The intent to use these translated terms used across their services and information channels, which will always include the English translation of te reo Māori in their public information.

Building product information requirements

[A downloadable print version of the step-by-step guide](#) on the building product information requirements provides an example of the end-to-end process and the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group as required by the regulations.

Changes to support the integrity and compliance of the building warrant of fitness regime

Cabinet have approved [changes to support the integrity and compliance of the building warrant of fitness regime](#). The purpose is to introduce and enhance offences and penalties for building owners and

independent qualified persons (IQPs) to better comply with their statutory requirements under the building warrant of fitness regime.

Have safe and happy holidays, and our best wishes for the New Year!

Selwyn District Council Building team

