

BUILDING SERVICES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Building Act 1975

DO YOU NEED A BUILDING PERMIT?

Before starting work on most buildings and structures, you may need a building permit, also known as a 'building approval', 'development approval' and 'building certification'.

Building permits can be obtained from any building certifier 'appropriately licensed' by the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC), whether they are employed as a local government building certifier or operate as a private enterprise. Council does not employ any building certifiers; building certification is outsourced to local building certifiers if required.

Building permits are required for all new building work.

Examples include:

- » new dwellings
- » removal homes
- » demolitions
- » alterations and additions to existing buildings
- » sheds, roofed patios, gazebos and any structures with an impermeable roof irrespective of their size
- » retaining walls over 1 m in height
- » underpinning
- » tenancy fit-outs
- » commercial buildings
- » swimming pools
- » some water tank installations
- » units
- » change of classification.

The building certifier is required by law to give the owner of the property a copy of the decision notice (part of the building permit) and related documents upon issuing a decision.

There are some types of building work that do not require a development permit in accordance with *Building Regulation 2006*. Examples include fences under 2 m for existing properties (but not pool fences), or certain types of retaining walls. Council encourages you to contact a QBCC licensed building certifier before starting work, for further information or advice.

In all cases, any building work must be contained within the property boundaries, clear of Council stormwater or sewer mains, and clear of any registered easement. Buildings or structures cannot be attached to a fence dividing allotments.

Plumbing and drainage

Council recommends that copies of the household drainage and Council sewerage drainage plans are obtained from Council before any building work commences. Contact Council's Assets and Hydraulics Team to obtain copies of the available plans.

It should be noted that all plumbing and drainage work that is either permit work, notifiable work, or minor work must be carried out by a Queensland licenced plumber/drainer. See Council's Plumbing and Drainage information sheet for more information.

Construction in tropical cyclone region

Townsville City Council is in a tropical cyclone region. As a result, structures may require higher standards of construction and material quality. Some structures (including garden sheds and fences) that may be exempt from requirements in other regions will require a building permit.

CAN ANY BUILDING CERTIFIER INSPECT WORKS?

Only the building certifier engaged to issue the building permit can undertake inspections of the building work. The building certifier's name and telephone number can usually be found on the 'decision notice' (the building permit), which was issued once plans were approved for the building work.

The certifier is required to give the owner a copy of any inspection certificates within 5 business days of completing the inspection.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT BUILDING CERTIFICATION

For more information about the processes of building certification:

- » visit the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) website
- » contact a private building certifier or building surveyor for building permit enquiries
- » contact Council's Planning Section for further information on Council assets (stormwater, sewerage, road openings).

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WHAT ARE YOUR OBLIGATIONS AS A PROPERTY OWNER?

The current property owner is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the necessary permits are obtained prior to the commencement of any building work on a property.

Note that the definition of building work under the *Building Act 1975* includes any excavation and filling work associated with the construction of a building or structure.

UNLAWFUL WORKS OR BUILDING COMPLAINTS

If you have a complaint regarding unlawful building and / or development work, the complaint will be actioned by Council's Planning and Development Section. The complaint must be lodged with the Customer Service Centre before any issue can be assessed.

ASBESTOS RELATED ISSUES

For information on asbestos related issues, visit the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland website.