

# building & consent news

KEEPING YOU INFORMED OF THE BUILDING AND CONSENTS PROCESS

Issue 02 November 08

## Welcome

to the second edition of Building and Consent News. I would like to take the opportunity to remind you that this publication is an opportunity for you to share your views so we welcome any contributions to this quarterly publication.

This month we have introduced a question and answer section, so if there is something you want to know about and think it would be of interest to the wider industry email your question to us at [coling@horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:coling@horowhenua.govt.nz) and we will attempt to provide an answer. We are also including information on the new Exemptions from Building Consent regulations, and an update on where we are with the process to achieve the second stage of accreditation as a Building Consent Authority under the Building Act 2004.

Finally, as this is the last newsletter before we all have a well deserved break over the Christmas/New Year period, festive wishes to all in the industry from the Horowhenua District Council Building Team.

**Mike Lepper**, Regulatory Business Unit Manager

## Emergency building teams need to be established

Horowhenua District Council Building Adviser Tim Taylor is coordinating volunteers to set up an emergency building team. The team will act as a network of eyes and ears on the ground during events such as floods, earthquakes, wind storms or any other emergency where damaged property may pose a threat to human safety and lines of communication may be difficult.

The team will be made up of experienced building industry professionals who are able to make assessments on affected property and liaise with Council staff as required. Full training will be given to volunteers. Team members will operate in geographic zones, ie Foxton, Foxton Beach, Levin, Tokomaru. Ideally, Horowhenua District Council would like to have enough volunteers to be able to provide a rapid response in each zone. If you are interested in providing your services for this, please contact Tim Taylor, email [timft@horowhenua.govt.nz](mailto:timft@horowhenua.govt.nz) or ph 06 366 0999 with your contact details.

Council would like to thank the following people for putting their names forward: Lee Thompson, Nick Spark, Alan Day, Doug Harrison, Todd Penny, Andrew Lloyd and Grant Campbell.

## Building team on reduced hours over Christmas break

Horowhenua District Council will be closed from 24 December 2008 until 5 January 2009. Council has skeleton staff only on duty over this period.

For urgent or emergency inspections over this period please ring Council's after hours service on 06 366 0999.

The statutory time for consent processing stops for the period from 20 December 2008 through to 10 January 2009.



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# Building industry: questions & answers

1. What is the minimum finished floor level from unprotected ground for:
  - (a) Dwellings, including sleepouts **ANSWER: 225mm**
  - (b) Garages, sheds, etc. **ANSWER: 100mm provided the cladding is not compromised**
2. What is the specified concrete strength at 28 days for:
  - (a) Sea Spray Zone (within 500m of the high tide mark) **ANSWER: 25mpa**
  - (b) Zone 1 (Horowhenua District) **ANSWER: 20mpa**
3. How many angle braces are required for a GS1a bracing element at 3,900m long?  
**ANSWER: Elements longer than 3.600m require a pair of angle braces in opposite directions. Refer pg51 Gib Site Guide.**
4. When are attached decks required to be braced?  
**ANSWER: When they are greater than 2 metres wide.**
5. What is the minimum treatment level for Valley Boards?  
**ANSWER: Minimum treatment of H3.1 as per NZS 3602 : 2003.**

## Consent processing times decreasing

The average processing time line for consents currently sits at 25 days but is slowly decreasing towards the statutory requirement of 20 days. Figures for the last three months show that more than 76 percent of consents have been processed within 20 days.

## End of year meeting date

The quarterly Building Industry meeting is to be held on 8 December 2008 at 5.30pm in the Council Chambers. This will be an informal meeting with drinks and nibbles to say thank you for your patience and support during the last 12 months. If you have suggested topics for discussion please call Colin Gibbs, Senior Building Officer, Ph 06 366 0999.



# New building consent exemption rules

New regulations that cover exemptions from requiring a building consent came into effect on 16 October 2008, as outlined below in the Guide to Exemptions. **The full schedule is available on the Council website [www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Services/Building.htm](http://www.horowhenua.govt.nz/Services/Building.htm)**

## Guide to exemptions from building consent requirements Under Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004

Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004 sets out the types of building work that do not require a building consent. However, the work must still comply with the Building Code and other legislation.

A number of changes to Schedule 1 became effective from 16 October 2008. These changes extend the types of building projects which do not require a building consent.

The following are some examples of building projects which will no longer require a building consent:

- Removal or alteration of a wall that is not a structural or bracing element.
- Awnings, pergolas or a veranda over a deck, under 15m<sup>2</sup>.
- Installation or replacement of windows, exterior doors or roof windows, provided that structural elements are not modified.
- Alteration of dwellings to improve access for persons with disabilities, including doorway modifications and access ramps, but excluding wet area accessible showers.
- Internal shop or office fit out where the work does not modify, or require modifications to, any specified systems or means of escape from fire.
- Alterations to existing plumbing in bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and toilets including minor drainage alteration (e.g.

shifting a gully trap) but excluding new connections to services. Any such alterations must be carried out by a registered plumber in accordance with the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act 1976.

- Erecting tents and marquees of up to 100sqm where they are for private use and up to 50sqm where they are intended for public assembly.

Owners and builders are advised to read Schedule 1 in full to assess whether or not their work requires consent before starting work on projects of this kind.

While the Building Act provides for the above exemptions the work must still comply with other legislation including:

- The Building Code
- The Resource Management Act 1991
- The Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 1976
- The Electricity Act 1992
- The Health Act 1956
- Bylaws
- Horowhenua District Plan\*.

\*It is important to note that while a building consent may not be required for the works specified, compliance with the District Plan rules pertaining to Daylight Setback Envelopes, Building Setback from boundaries and Maximum Building Coverage still apply. It is strongly suggested that you check with the Council officers whether any planning consents are necessary prior to undertaking exempted work.





## Stage two accreditation on the way

At present the Building Team is gearing up for stage two of accreditation as a Building Consent Authority under the Building Act 2004.

We are now working towards compliance with Regulation 17, which covers our policies and practices associated with quality control. Our Quality Assurance Policy is included here for your information.

### Horowhenua District Council: Quality Assurance Policy

Horowhenua District Council is committed to the concept of: Sustaining and improving the high quality of building control and associated services provided to customers based on professionalism, technical excellence, care, attention and public accountability by complying with the building consent authority accreditation requirements, the Building Act 2004, and the Building Regulations.

Horowhenua District Council will ensure this quality assurance policy is understood and implemented by all Building Consent Authority employees and contractors through regular coaching by management, internal audits, monitoring and assessment. A high standard of technical skill will be maintained throughout the organisation together with a high level of compliance

with the organisation's processes and procedures.

Horowhenua District Council will provide documented assurance to organisational management, employees, contractors and customers that the service is being provided in a consistent, professional, technically competent, effective and efficient manner.

#### We will achieve this by:

- Making the process of applying for, and obtaining, a building consent as simple and as easy as possible, without compromising technical quality.
- Providing the name and means of contact of the employee or contractor who is dealing with the work.
- Treating all customers impartially, fairly, courteously and respectfully.
- Responding promptly to the requirements of customers, the Building Consent Accreditation Body and the Department of Building and Housing.
- Providing a friendly and inviting atmosphere for customers, employees and contractors.
- Promoting integrity, honesty and professionalism as key elements of all aspects of our business activities and relationships and ensuring against conflicts of interest.
- Ensuring the organisation's decisions are based on good legal advice where required.
- Valuing all customers and developing and maintaining good working relationships

with customers, suppliers, contractors and regulatory bodies.

- Processing all applications within the required statutory periods.
- Ensuring that all work undertaken is within the identified technical competency and capability of appropriate employees and contractors.

To meet these objectives, the building consent authority applies the quality assurance system outlined in this quality assurance policy which has been developed in accordance with the Building Consent Authority accreditation requirements.

Conformance with the requirements of the appropriate detailed procedures outlined in this quality assurance system is a requirement for all employees and contractors engaged in the provision of building consent authority services.

