

General Building Information Sheet

Building Certification and Building Approvals

- The legislation controlling building work in Queensland includes the *Planning Act 2016*, the *Building Act 1975*, the *Building Regulation 2006*, the Building Code of Australia and the Queensland Development Code. This includes applications for most forms of development including building work. Applications for building work are made on the development application Form 2.
- Building Certifiers are registered with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) like builders and other trades. Somerset Regional Council's building certifiers approve and inspect work in the region. Your Council has building certifiers on staff to provide advice and to assist in gaining approval of and subsequent inspection of your building works in the Somerset Region.
- You have a choice of using your Council or a private certifier.
- If a private building certifier is engaged, a notice of engagement must be sent to the Somerset Regional Council and the owner. When the building approval is issued by the private certifier they must forward a copy of the approval documents to the Council. The mandatory inspection of these building works is to be performed by the private certifier and the advice of completion also forwarded to the Council. If a private certifier has approved the building works, then the Council's building certifiers will not be inspecting the works.

Pre-lodgement conferences with the Council staff perform desirable and helpful functions in assisting the smooth passage of a properly made application. It is always necessary to obtain advice in respect to the proposed land use under the planning scheme. You can discuss the use and overlays which may be relevant with Council's planning officers.

Building approval is required for the following less obvious things: removal and replacement of structural elements of a building, restumping, enclosure of previously roofed areas, open sided structures greater than 10 sq met, carports and patios to existing buildings, shade sail structures, unroofed decks greater than 10 sq met, retaining walls greater than one meter above ground level, changing the use of a building and demolishing a structure. Lawn lockers (3m x 3m) do not require applications, as do other minor structures of less than 10 square metres.

Exemption from a building application exists for genuine farm storage buildings, greater than 200m from all boundaries. It is requested that you notify Council of the exemption being claimed on a Statutory Declaration prepared for this purpose, with the inclusion of a site plan indicating the proposed location. Written verification of acceptance will be provided for your records.

Other Applications

- Local governments are responsible for a number of other matters including: performance based siting decisions, removal dwelling pre-inspections, existing pool fence inspections, planning approvals, plumbing and drainage approvals, operational works approvals for dams, accesses, road works and some Environmental Relevant Activities (ERA's). Some of these are to be obtained prior to a building work approval being issued.
- Earthworks and ancillary site works to be performed prior to or not approved as part of a building application are required to have an operational works approval from the Council's Operations department prior to works starting.
- Plumbing Applications are made on Form 1 under the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018*.
- All building applications incur a lodgement or archive fee for recording and storing approvals.
- Building approvals remain current for two years except for demolitions/removal dwellings where the currency period is twelve months, and pools where it is further reduced to three months for fencing safety reasons. A Council form is available for requests to extend the time frames for commencement or completion. Reassessment and inspections performed after the initial period may incur further fees.

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QBCC

- The Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) provides a homeowner's protection scheme on domestic construction work. Registered builders and licensed contractors must pay insurance when the value of residential works exceeds \$3,300.
- The contractor is required to make arrangements direct with the QBCC for the insurance coverage.
- Evidence of cover by the registered contractor should accompany the application.
- It is advisable to use QBCC licensed trades persons or builders to perform all building work.
- QBCC insurance is not payable on building work where an owner builder number has been obtained, commercial work or exempt farm sheds.
- Owners can personally build (i.e. 'Owner to Build') their own residential building works to the value of \$11,000 without obtaining an owner builder number.
- An owner must employ a registered builder to construct farm sheds of a value greater than \$27,500, unless he has an owner builder number.

Note: Please contact QBCC on 1300 272 272 for owner builder applications and accredited course details or log onto www.qbcc.qld.gov.au.

QLEAVE

- For works costing \$150,000 or more, the QLEAVE (Portable Long Service Leave Scheme Levy) form and receipt of payment must be sighted by building certifiers prior to approval and should accompany the application.
- The levy form is obtained and payment made at any post office or the QLEAVE website.

Note: The levy is not payable by owner builders however the form (claiming exemption) must still be lodged with the post office and a copy brought to the certifier for works costing \$150,000 or more.

Building Work Sites

- Building work sites are to be managed appropriately in respect to nuisance to surrounding property, roads and neighbours. Informative signage about your development assists all concerned.
- A temporary toilet must be provided on-site prior to works commencing.
- Appropriate means of rubbish containment and disposal are to be provided on a building site.
- Management of the site to control dust or wet weather including stormwater / sediment runoff nuisance and transfer of mud by vehicles / machines is necessary.
- Building work sites are to be secured to prevent inadvertent entry.
- Respect others work and avoid damaging existing infrastructure.
- Dial before you dig to be completed before earthworks commence.
- You should endeavour to achieve high standards of communication with all concerned to produce effective and successful outcomes in our community.

Allotment Surveys and Boundary Pegs

- The owner is responsible for determining the boundaries and placement of survey pegs on their land.
- The owner and builder are responsible for the measurement of the correct distances from the survey boundary before commencing the building work.
- Building setbacks are measured from the outermost point (normally the fascia).
- An identification survey by a land surveyor may be required by the building certifier where there is any doubt about the location of survey pegs or building lines as per the approval.

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Design

- All building works are to comply with the *Planning Act 2016*, *Building Act 1975*, *Building Regulation 2006*, the Building Code of Australia, the Queensland Development Code and all other relevant Australian Standards and manufacturer's literature.
- Siting requirements are set within the above legislation and codes. The relevant planning scheme may also have site requirements. These require to be interpreted by the designer or building certifier in conjunction with the landowner. Site plans should be drawn from a current investigation of the site.
- Builders may draw the plans for works they are going to construct, but normally use the services of a Qld Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) licensed draftsman, an architect or an engineer. Owners will be required to provide professionally drafted plans including the title block details of the licensed designer with all applications for building work.
- Information about the proposed site needs to be gathered. This may include copy of the registered plan from the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. This will also reveal registered easements.
- Urban Utilities may have information on sewer mains and water mains. Council may have location details of sewerage house drains but septic installations have not been recorded.

Land liable to flooding

- Certain allotments within the Somerset Regional Council have been identified as land which may be liable to flooding. Information regarding flood affected land may be available at the Esk Office.
- Floor heights for habitable areas are to be:
All locations across Fernvale/Lowood in flood study area, a minimum freeboard of 500mm above the highest combination of:
 - The 100 year ARI (average recurrence interval) for the areas impacted by the Brisbane River, and (ii) the 100 year ARI for the areas impacted by local flooding, or
 - Elsewhere throughout the region, a minimum of 300mm above any previous flood level. It is the owner's responsibility to provide evidence of flood heights where any doubt exists.

Access to Properties

- The provision and maintenance of access to properties is the responsibility of the property owner.
- Work should not proceed on access construction without the written approval of Council. In order to obtain information and permission, Council's Operations Department should be contacted on (07) 5424 4000.

Inspections during construction

- Upon approval of the application, builder's / owner builder's sign (a QBCC requirement) and site identification must be erected to assist in locating the site to carry out inspections.
- The stages of construction requiring inspections are listed in the approval decision notice but normally occur with steel in place before concrete is poured in bored piers, footings, slabs or block walls; before cladding of framing to see bracing and tie down; fire wall construction before concealment and at completion of works.
- Inspection times are to be arranged with Council's building certifiers (07) 5424 4000, and at least 24 hours notice must be given when booking inspections.
- It is helpful to have the permit number, owner's name and site details ready when calling.
- Remember, inspections are paid for up front and therefore it is in your own interests to confirm that the contractor has booked the inspections at the appropriate times and that the appropriate inspection certificates have been issued on the satisfactory work.

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Disclaimer

The information contained in this handout has been prepared with due care. This handout is offered only for the purpose of providing useful information to assist those interested in lodging a building application. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that this handout is in accordance with current regulations, it is not intended as an exhaustive statement of all relevant data, and no responsibility is accepted for errors in, or omissions from this handout.

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