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NEW ZEALAND BUILDING CODE

We look at the Building Code and how it operates to ensure houses meet specific requirements.

Relationship with Building Act

The New Zealand Building Code is a schedule to the Building Regulations 1992. It prescribes functional requirements for buildings and the performance criteria with which buildings must comply in their intended use.

How it operates

The New Zealand Building Code is a **performance-based code**. Rather than telling people exactly how to build, it sets out objectives to be achieved.

For example, one of the objectives is to 'safeguard people from illness or injury which could result from external moisture entering the building'. Therefore, you need to ensure that buildings are weathertight.

The Code does not prescribe construction methods, but gives guidance on how a building and its components must **perform** as opposed to how the building must be designed and constructed.

The Building Code is divided into clauses, and each clause begins with an objective like the one above. Specific **performance criteria** for each clause then describe the extent to which buildings must meet those objectives.

Compliance Documents

Compliance Documents (previously known as **Approved Documents**) are published by the Department of Building and Housing (DBH).

They contain prescriptive design solutions known as **Acceptable Solutions**, which are intended to assist people to comply with the Building Code. The Compliance Documents are not mandatory – you can use alternative ways of building provided these also come up to the required performance standards stipulated in the Building Code. These other methods are known as **alternative solutions**.

If you use an Alternative Solution when you apply for a [building consent](#), your Building Consent Authority (usually your city or district [council](#)) will look at your Alternative Solution and decide whether it will meet the requirements of the Building Code. You will need to provide sufficient information to show how your alternative solution will meet the requirements.

For further information on the Building Code, visit the [Department of Building and Housing](#). To read the Building Act, visit www.legislation.govt.nz.