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Building Consent Requirements Simplified

More kinds of common, minor, or low risk building work now no longer needs a building consent.

The types of building work that do not require a building consent are set out in Schedule 1 of the Building Act 2004. In October 2008, Schedule 1 was expanded and 12 new exemptions introduced. The new exemptions should help save building owners and builders time and money, and will allow building consent authorities to focus on building consent applications that are more complex and of higher risk. The new exemptions allow:

- The alteration of existing drainage in residential dwellings where this work is done by a licensed drainlayer;
- A licensed craftsman plumber to carry out alterations to sanitary plumbing in residential dwellings;
- Windows, skylights, exterior doorways to be installed, removed, or replaced if there have not been weathertightness problems and there is no reduction in structural stability;
- For certain alterations to entrances and internal doorways of residential dwellings to improve access for disabled persons provided there is no reduction in structural stability;
- Non-residential buildings to be internally altered provided the alteration does not reduce compliance with the Building Code and no specified systems are modified without a building consent;
- The construction, alteration, or removal of a internal wall (including an internal doorway) in an existing building where the building's structural stability or means of escape from fire are not detrimentally affected, and the wall is not a masonry wall;
- The construction, alteration, or removal of a non-permanent tent or marquee as long as it is smaller than 50m² (for public use) or smaller than 100 m² (for public use);
- Allows small detached buildings to be erected as long as these are smaller than 10m² and does not have cooking, sanitary or drinking water facilities;
- Awnings less than 15m² extending from the ground floor or first floor to be constructed, altered, or removed;
- Pergolas to be constructed, altered, or removed without a building consent; and
- Ground of first floor verandas or porches less than 15m² which extend over a deck or patio to be constructed, altered, or removed.

This information is only a summary of the law, and there are exceptions to these general summaries. You should consult the Building Act for full details and requirements.

The Department of Building and Housing has also published a comprehensive guidance document on exempted building work.

The guidance document is available on the Department's website: www.dbh.govt.nz/publications-about-the-building-act-2004