

17 October 2008

Some projects no longer require building consent

New Building Act exemptions that took effect yesterday will mean fewer projects will require building consents.

The changes to Schedule 1 of the Building Act that became effective from 16 October 2008, are part of a range of initiatives to streamline the building and consent process by removing low risk work from the consenting process.

The exemptions include building projects such as;

- Removing or altering a wall that is not structural or bracing
- Awnings, pergolas or a verandah over a deck (15 sq m maximum)
- Installing or replacing windows, exterior doors or roof windows, providing that structural elements are not changed
- Altering homes to improve disability access (excluding wet area accessible showers)
- Internal shop or office fit out where changes do not affect specified systems or means of escape from fire
- Altering existing plumbing, including minor drainage alterations but excluding new connections
- Erecting tent and marquees (size and use restrictions do apply)

“The law change is essentially good news for people undertaking smaller projects,” says Senior Building Inspector Richard Knudsen. “People do need to be aware however, that while Schedule 1 of the Building Act provides for some exemptions from building consent work, it must still meet the Building Code and other legislation still may apply. There may be requirements under the Building Code, Resource Management Act, Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act, Health Act and other legislation and by-laws. If people are uncertain what restrictions apply, we would encourage them to make an appointment to come and talk their project over with us before starting work.”

The Department of Building and Health advises owners and builders to read Schedule 1 in full to assess whether or not their work requires consent before commencing work.

Further details on the changes to the Building Act are available from the Department of Building and Housing website at www.dbh.govt.nz. For more information, phone the council's Customer Service staff on 03 788 9111.

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**Further information; Richard Knudsen (Senior Building Inspector)
Buller District Council (03) 788 9612**