

18 June 2010

Fact Sheet 2: Building, Renovating, Altering or Relocating Your Home?

In the NT all these activities require building approval.

1. Getting Started

If you are thinking about building a new house or renovating, altering or moving an existing house you need to get a Building Permit before you start work.

For information on how to get a Building Permit, see *Fact Sheet 1: How Do I Get Building Approval*.

2. Engage a NT Registered Building Contractor

The *Building Act* requires that if your building work is:

- Worth over \$12,000; and
- for Class 1a, 2 & 10 buildings or for a retaining wall which supports a Class 1a building; or
- renovations to Class 1a or 2 buildings which increase floor area; or
- any alteration to a building; or
- relocating an existing building;

you are required to engage a NT registered Building Contractor.

3. Preparing Plans

Before you obtain a building permit you will need to prepare drawings of the proposed building. If you have engaged a Building Contractor they may be able to arrange plans on your behalf. The finished drawings must include an accurate and to-scale site plan, floor plans, elevations and structural detail. Structural plans must also be approved by a NT registered Structural Engineer.

4. Engage a NT Registered Building Certifier

Once you have plans of the proposed building, you will need to engage a NT registered Building Certifier to issue a Building Permit before you start building work.

You will need to give the Building Certifier a completed Application for Building Permit, and:

- details of the proposed building (including drawings);
- structural engineer's certification for the structural design;

- certified plumbing design (for any plumbing work);
- a statement describing the purpose of the building;
- proof that the relevant insurance has been obtained;
- evidence of a building contract; and
- application for a building permit.

The Building Certifier will assess your application for a Building Permit to make sure that the proposed work complies with the *Building Act* and *Regulations*. He/she may also seek modifications and siting waivers if necessary.

5. Issue of a Building Permit

Once a Building Certifier has issued you a Building Permit, the permit is valid for two years from the date of issue. This time may be extended by applying to the Building Certifier **before** the expiry date.

Before construction starts, the Building Certifier should have:

- approved all plans
- forwarded the Building Permit and accompanying plans to the Director of Building Control;
- checked that insurance has been taken out; and
- informed the builder of the appropriate mandatory inspections.

6. Inspections

During construction, your Building Contractor must have the work inspected by the Building Certifier at specific inspection stages. These stages include:

- Pre-pour inspection – footings & slab;
- Frame inspection;
- Block work reinforcing inspection;
- Fire separation
- Wet areas; and
- Final inspection.

It is important to note that your Building Certifier may require further inspections. These will be noted on your building permit.

7. Role of the Building Contractor

The Building Contractor has the responsibility to:

- ensure any work is covered by a building contract;
- provide details of his/her registration to you and the Building Certifier;
- arrange for appropriate insurance before a building permit is issued;
- build in accordance with the Building Permit and approved plans;
- notify the Building Certifier when mandatory inspections are required; and
- provide a declaration to the Building Certifier on completion of work stating that work has been carried out in accordance with the Building Permit.

8. Completion of Work

At completion of building work, the Building Contractor must sign a declaration stating the building works have been carried out in accordance with the permit. This must be given to your Building Certifier before an Occupancy Permit is granted.

Amendments/variations to the approved design must be approved by the Building Certifier.

9. Occupancy Permit

When the building is constructed in compliance with the Building Permit and approved plans, you must apply to your Building Certifier for an Occupancy Permit. The Building Certifier will tell you what documents need to be lodged with your application and must resolve the application within 20 days.

Note: A building cannot be occupied unless an Occupancy Permit has been issued. The Building Certifier must forward a copy of the Occupancy Permit to the Director of Building Control within seven days of issue.

10. Finding a NT Registered Building Practitioner

A list of NT registered building practitioners can be found on the Building Practitioners Board website at: www.nt.gov.au/bpb or by contacting the Building Practitioners Board on 8923 9309.

For further information about building rules and regulations contact the Building Advisory Services Branch in your region or visit our website : www.nt.gov.au/building

DARWIN
Ground Floor, Cavenagh House
38 Cavenagh Street
DARWIN NT 0800

Ph: 8999 8985 or 8999 8966

KATHERINE
1st Floor, Government Centre
First Street
KATHERINE NT 0850

Ph: 8973 8926

TENNANT CREEK
Transport and Works Building
Leichardt Street
TENNANT CREEK NT 0860

Ph: 8951 9235 (Alice Springs)

ALICE SPRINGS
First Floor, Alice Springs Plaza
Todd Mall / Parsons St
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870

Ph: 8951 9235

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CONSUMER CHECKLIST				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommended				
Building Work	Contract?	Building Permit?	Insurance?	Registered Builder?
New house	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Removing an Existing House to a new location ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renovating Bathroom – Changing walls / fixtures / plumbing ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renovating Bathroom – No change to walls / fixtures / plumbing ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alterations / Extensions to Existing House – increases floor area ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Alterations / Extensions to Existing House – No increase in floor area ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Existing House – changing windows / roof ¹	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Additions to Existing House – Solar hot water systems; skylight; roof vents; satellite dish *	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Carport / Verandah (to existing house) ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Garden Shed / Workshop ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pergola / Shade Structure ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New Fence ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Renovating an existing Fence ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New Retaining Wall – supporting building work ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
New Retaining Wall – not supporting building work ^{1*}	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Swimming Pools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
¹ subject to provisions of the <i>Building Act</i> regarding type of work	* subject to relevant exemptions policy			

10. What if Something Goes Wrong?

Building practitioners typically work to professional and ethical standards. However, sometimes there may be concerns about a building practitioner's work, professional conduct or ability to practise.

Your building contract must contain provisions for dispute resolution. It is important that you try to resolve any matter between the parties as an agreed resolution is often more in the parties' interests than one decided by the courts.

If you are unable to resolve your complaint pursuant to the *Building Act* the Director of Building Control has responsibility for the investigation of complaints and taking appropriate action against registered building practitioners if required. For further details contact Building Advisory Services on 8999 8985.

11. Insurance

Your Building Contractor is required to obtain an approved policy of insurance against failure to carry out building work which complies with the Building Code.

This insurance policy is known as Home Building Certification Fund (HBCF) and is currently provided by the Territory Insurance Office.

12. Legislation

The *Building Act* provides the framework for the control and standards of building in the NT.

The Building Regulations provide the technical requirements which must be satisfied in order to comply with the Act. The relevant technical requirements are set down in the:

- Building Code of Australia;
- National Plumbing Code (ASNZ:3500); and
- Code of Practice for small on-site sewage and sullage treatment systems and the disposal or reuse of sewage effluent.

13. Penalties under the Act

Under the *Building Act*, penalties can be imposed for failure to comply with the Act.

Fines can be as much as \$50,000 depending on the severity of the offence.