



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety**



Audit priorities statement 2021–2022

Building and Energy Audit Strategy
**Taking a risk-based approach to
minimising harm**



Building and building surveying

An important function of the Building Commissioner is to audit the work and conduct of registered builders and building surveyors and to monitor how well building standards are being applied.¹

The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) – Building and Energy Division (Building and Energy) has developed a risk-based [Audit Strategy](#) to support these functions. Building and Energy has appointed a team of highly skilled and experienced registered practitioners to carry out compliance and general inspections.

The Audit strategy aims to reduce risk to Western Australians by focusing efforts on construction practices that pose the greatest risks to public health and safety. To achieve this, Building and Energy collects and carefully analyses a wide range of data to identify and then assess emerging risks.

The Audit priorities statement outlines where Building and Energy intends to focus its efforts on a year by year basis having carefully assessed the prevailing risks and its capacity to deliver inspection services. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each audit are then set having regard to previous compliance data and availability of resources. By taking a risk-based approach to minimising harm Building and Energy aims to build a strong culture of compliance where industry participants understand it is better to do the job right the first time than risk being caught cutting corners or making costly mistakes that put the community at risk.

Consistent with DMIRS' Transparency Policy, Building and Energy prepares reports on its auditing activities including technical information gathered during compliance and general inspections. These reports are published for the benefit of the WA building and construction industry and the community as a whole. Individual site inspection reports will only be provided to the relevant builder or building surveyor.

As a first step, Building and Energy will undertake a 'snapshot' review of a small sample of buildings or building or building surveying work to inform itself and industry on an emerging issue.² Where a snapshot review is sufficient, Building and Energy will produce a report which is intended to draw attention to a potential issue rather than make conclusive findings that there is a systemic compliance concern. A snapshot review will often be accompanied by an industry bulletin seeking to educate industry about the appropriate method of construction. A snapshot review can also deliver confidence that industry practices are satisfactory.

When it is appropriate to deliver confidence that a general inspection finding represents an unsatisfactory and widespread industry practice, Building and Energy may conduct a more in depth inspection. Due consideration to a statistically significant sample size will be undertaken during the development of an inspection plan. Again, Building and Energy will produce a report detailing the compliance issues identified during the General Inspection and what steps have been taken to achieve improved compliance.

Non-compliant or unsatisfactory building or building surveying work will be brought to the attention of the builder or building surveyor in the first instance. If warranted, further investigations will be undertaken by Building and Energy where the inspection found registered builders or building surveyors may have breached their registration obligations. In cases where the non-compliant building work poses a public health or safety risk to occupants or the community, these will be referred to the relevant permit authority which has the powers to enforce compliance with approved plans and building standards.

¹ See *Building Services (Complaint Resolution and Administration) Act 2011*, s88

² Visit <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/building-and-energy/compliance-reports> for examples of Building and Energy's Compliance Reports and General Inspection Reports

Compliance Inspections

The intent of Building and Energy's compliance inspections is to monitor the work and conduct of registered building and building surveying contractors and to determine whether all the requirements for registration are being met.

Each year Building and Energy may select a number of builders and/or building surveyors to audit and these can be chosen on a random and targeted basis. Where previous inspections into regulatory compliance has delivered confidence that compliance rates are high, further regulatory audits may not be prioritised in any given year. In 2021–22 Building and Energy has decided to focus its efforts on builders' technical compliance.

Building and building surveying contractors selected for a compliance inspection will be provided reasonable notice of an impending audit. They will be afforded every opportunity to engage with Building and Energy staff members during inspections and any subsequent discussions regarding areas of concern.

Building Contractors – Technical only

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Class 1a residential buildings ³ | Buildings are selected at random from the full list of building work being undertaken by the building contractor at the time of the audit. In 2021–22 the focus of technical inspections will be: | Minimum 44 buildings inspected |
| Contractors and associated residential building work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof tie-down • Timber wall framing | |

Building Surveyor Contractors

| | | |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Building Classes 2-9 | Building surveying work will be selected at random from the full list of building surveying work being carried out by the building surveying contractor in the 12 months prior to the inspection. | Minimum 80 certificates inspected |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|

³ Building classes can be viewed in Table One.

General Inspections

Building and Energy's general inspections monitor how well the building service Acts are operating and how well building standards are being applied.

Each year Building and Energy selects areas of construction that have been deemed to pose the greatest public health or safety risk. For the 21–22 period Building and Energy will conduct general inspections into the following areas:

| General Inspections | | |
|---|--|---|
| Balustrading (barriers) and glass installations | Randomly selected class 1a, 2 and 3 buildings | Minimum 24 buildings inspected |
| Passive fire safety systems | Randomly selected class 2 buildings | Minimum 24 buildings inspected |
| Management and Supervision | Randomly selected management and supervision questionnaire responses | Minimum 24 builders' responses assessed |

Management and supervision

Commencing 1 July 2020 applicants for renewal or registration as building contractors are required to complete a questionnaire on arrangements in place for management and supervision of the building service in accordance with the Building Services Board Management and Supervision Policy (Policy). Building and Energy will carry out a General Inspection to assess whether the objectives of the Policy are being met and determine whether arrangements are in place to address the responsibilities in the Policy.

Balustrading (barriers) including Glass Balustrades

Balustrades, also known as barriers, are installed on buildings to protect edges of balconies and raised levels. Balustrade products and installation represents a significant potential for harm if they are not fit for purpose or are installed incorrectly. Building and Energy has become aware of a number of instances where glass, and balustrade installations have failed in recent times. As these failures can pose a life safety risk to users of a building, Building and Energy will carry out a general inspection investigation of balustrades to assess how building standards are being applied through the approval process, procurement and manufacture of balustrade products. This issue is also being examined by other Australian building regulators and Building and Energy is working collaboratively via the Building Regulators Forum in relation to the findings of its and other jurisdictions' audits.

Passive fire safety systems

Passive fire safety installation forms an integral part of a building's resistance to the spread of fire. An example of such installations would be the use of compartmentation, by using fire resisting walls, to stop the spread of fire from one part of the building to another. Through past inspection activities, Building and Energy has become aware of instances of non-compliance with the requirements of passive fire safety systems. Building and Energy will carry out a general inspection to assess the effectiveness of the current Australian Standards and how these standards are being applied.

Audit Priorities 2020–21

Reports and Industry Bulletins

Published

- [Industry Bulletin 134 – Improving the performance of internal wet areas](#)
- [Industry Bulletin 138 – Weatherproofing – Windows and doors](#)
- [Industry Bulletin 139 – Coating and corrosion failure to carports and patios](#)

Coming soon:

- Compliance Report – A summary of technical building inspections (class 1 – residential buildings) 2020–21
- Compliance Report – A summary of building surveying inspections 2020–21
- General Inspection (snapshot) Report Six – Waterproofing wet areas
- General Inspection (snapshot) Report Seven – Certificates of design compliance for building classes 7b and 8

Table One – Building Code of Australia – Building Classes

| Building Code of Australia – classification | Types of buildings |
|---|--|
| Class 1a, 1b | Free standing or attached (side by side) single dwellings and additions; small boarding houses, guest houses |
| Class 2 | Residential apartment buildings |
| Class 3 | Residential portions of hotels, motels, hospitals, health care or residential care buildings |
| Class 4 | Separate dwelling in a class 5,6,7,8 and 9 building |
| Class 5 | Office/commercial premises |
| Class 6 | Retail/shop premises |
| Class 7a, 7b | Car parks and warehouses |
| Class 8 | Factories, laboratories and workshops |
| Class 9a, 9b, 9c | Health care; assembly; aged care buildings |
| Class 10a, 10b, 10c | Non-habitable buildings (garage/shed and the like); a structure (fence, wall, mast, swimming pool); private bushfire shelter |

Government of Western Australia

**Department of Mines, Industry Regulation
and Safety**

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