



## Industry Bulletin 154

# Building to the approved plans

*This Industry Bulletin brings to the attention of builders the importance of:*

- **completing building work in accordance with the plans and specifications referenced on the relevant certificate of design compliance (the approved plans);**
- **properly consulting prior to proceeding with work which differs from the approved plans (changes); and**
- **consulting with the appropriate building professional when it appears the approval varies from the requirements of the Building Code of Australia (BCA).**

### Builders' responsibilities

Section 29 of the *Building Act 2011* requires that the person named as the builder on the building permit ensures that a building or incidental structure is completed in accordance with the approved plans and applicable building standards.

Changes from the approved plans include, but are not limited to:

- not conforming with the approved construction methods;
- not conforming with the engineer's endorsed, and/or manufacturer's details; or
- building product substitution.

### What about when changes are necessary?

Building and Energy has received feedback from builders that sometimes changes are necessary on site for a variety of reasons including where the approved plans are not suited to a particular situation on site or where the nominated design criteria, or a proposed construction method detailed in design documentation appears to vary from that required by the BCA.

In these instances Building and Energy advises builders to consult on any changes in order to verify and document compliance prior to making any changes. Stakeholders that builders should consult with include:

- the building surveyor who signed the certificate of design compliance, to assess the changes for compliance with applicable building standards;
- the permit authority, to determine the need for a new or updated building approval and to amend its records accordingly;
- design professionals such as structural engineers to design and document the changes; or
- other parties as necessary.

### An example of departure from approved plans

Building and Energy recently inspected a house that lost its roof in a Perth storm. Due to shortages in timber supplies the builder substituted the roof framing with an alternative material without reference to appropriate stakeholders including input from design professionals such as structural engineers. This decision ultimately led to the failure of the substituted materials and the loss of the roof.

Manufacturer's installation details are typically required to be followed to satisfy the approved plans. The changes to materials that were made in this example were not consistent with the manufacturer's details or the approved plans.

Material shortages may necessitate product substitution and builders must exercise caution and ensure they obtain the necessary stakeholder input and approvals before proceeding.

Further information on product conformity can be found on the [ABCB website](#).

#### Building and Energy

Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety  
**1300 489 099**

8.30am – 4.30pm

Level 1 Mason Bird Building

303 Sevenoaks Street (entrance Grose Avenue)  
Cannington Western Australia 6107

M: **Locked Bag 100, East Perth WA 6892**

W: [www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/building-and-energy](http://www.dmirs.wa.gov.au/building-and-energy)

E: [be.info@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:be.info@dmirs.wa.gov.au)

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