

Things you need
to know about

Certificates of Acceptance

Certificates of Acceptance (COA)

What are they?

A means of showing compliance with the Building Code for:

- Building work that was carried out without the required building consent being obtained prior to commencement of building work.
- Building work carried out by previous owner of a building (typically alterations to a house).
- Urgent building work carried out under section 42 of the Building Act 2004, e.g. Replacement of a septic tank as the result of a substantial failure, where a health risk would have resulted if the tank and/or effluent disposal field was not rectified immediately.

Please note: It is an offence not to apply for a Certificate of Acceptance for building work carried out under this section.

Exceptions

This does not apply to building work carried out prior to 1 July 1992.

Cost

An application fee is payable on receipt of the COA application to the Council. The fee covers the initial assessment of the application. Should the COA be granted, additional processing charges on an hourly rate will be incurred. On building work over \$20,000 government levies must be collected by Council on their behalf.

What should be included in the application?

Application must be in the prescribed form (Form 8) and accompanied by the same documentation provided for a Building Consent application (three copies).

It will be vetted and assessed in much the same way as a Building Consent is processed. Staff will need to research the property file to assess if the work complies with Building Code requirements in relation to drainage and connection to services as well as such things as the District Plan, particularly in regard to site coverage and recession plane requirements.

An incomplete application will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant pending the required information. It is advisable to



engage a reputable building designer to prepare and submit this application. Please remember that he/she must be authorised in writing to act as the agent in the COA application.

How long does it take to process?

The Council has 20 working days in which it must decide whether a COA can be issued. The clock may be stopped should additional information be required.

The Council may issue the COA with or without conditions including exclusions for work not able to be verified and for durability waiver for work carried out some time ago.

Can a Certificate of Acceptance be declined?

Yes. All building work must comply with the New Zealand Building Code and it is the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate an appropriate level of compliance, both in the documentation and on site.

Demonstration of compliance on site by inspection may require wall linings to be removed. Sometimes work is not able to be checked and verified, resulting in the inability of the Council to identify compliance.

Should a COA be declined, the application fee is non-refundable, although a pro rata rebate may be given.

Other options available should a COA be declined

It may be possible to have a reputable building person/organisation provide a building report attesting to the structural stability, integrity and durability of the building work (sometimes referred to as a "safe and sanitary" report).

This property report can be submitted to Council and be placed on the property file. This information may be useful to a potential purchaser/seller should the property be advertised for sale.



For additional information please contact the Waimakariri District Council on 03 311 8900