

October 2021

News

The last couple of months have been challenging for the building and construction industry in Marlborough. High demand, supply chain issues, the July floods and Covid19 lockdown have all added to the pressures that the industry is facing.

The July storm event forced Marlborough into a State of Emergency and saw hundreds of residents evacuated from properties in Renwick, Tua Marina, Grovetown and various settlements in the Marlborough Sounds. On July 17th rainfall in the Kenepuru totaled 195mm. Onamalutu measured over 300mm in 48 hours.

There was structural and water damage to buildings due to floodwater, slips and mudslides. Compared with the Buller District, Marlborough got off relatively lightly, however the transport infrastructure suffered widespread damage. The roads in the Marlborough Sounds, Awatere and the Waihopai will take many months to repair. Marlborough Roads have a huge job in front of them to try and restore the roading network back to its full capacity. Consideration needs to be taken when planning projects in these areas as delays and weight restrictions will be in place for the near foreseeable future. For roading updates around Marlborough check the [alerts](#) page on the MDC website. It is good news to hear that the Queen Charlotte Track has fully reopened.



Covid19 lockdown restrictions all but put a stop to most building and construction projects. However, designers were busy over lockdown as a healthy number of building consents were received during this time. I know some people in the industry have voiced opinions about the frustrations of the construction industry not being able to operate at Level 4 even though they could prove their work was undertaken safely. Hopefully restrictions are a thing of the past.

Overall building consent application numbers are still high. September saw 34 consents issued for new dwellings. This is one of the highest monthly totals in the last ten years.

Recently I was involved with the Upper South Island Master Builders Apprentice of the Year judging. It was really encouraging to see these apprentices showing so much talent and a real passion for the industry in their early stages of their careers. If all these apprentices stay in the building industry it does see the local building industry in a healthy state. Congratulations to Finn Eden from Tasman Homes Nelson who won the Upper South Island Region. He will represent the region at the Nationals later this year.

Asbestos

Asbestos in Pre 2000 Building Additions and Alterations

Council is receiving a number of inquiries as to how the industry is to deal with asbestos. Below is a brief outline of how this all comes about so you can get an insight what Building Control need from you when asbestos is involved in a project.

Worksafe NZ is the agency which is mandated with ensuring any employer and employee is kept safe in the work place, in this case asbestos. The legislation that this guidance derives from is the Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016 Act and the Building Code clause F2 Hazardous Building Materials. The legislation puts the responsibility on the employer to ensure any employee who enters a work place is safe guarded against any effects from the disturbance or removal of Asbestos. Council as an employer has this responsibility as does any builder or owner who employs someone to undertake work.

Asbestos Surveys

Most in the industry can hazard a guess as to what is and isn't asbestos but chances are without appropriate training it is guess work. Therefore to be sure you know whether products containing asbestos are to be disturbed during your project you need a qualified assessor to provide an asbestos survey at the time of applying for a building consent. There are several companies in Marlborough that now specialise in asbestos surveys. They should be able to assist you in providing the correct documentation for the consenting process.

Asbestos Management Plans

The building consent application should also include an asbestos management plan. The asbestos management plan sets out where any identified asbestos or material containing asbestos is present, and how it will be managed. This plan needs to be provided at the time of building consent application.



Asbestos Removal Certificates

The Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulations 2016 Act allows a non-registered removalist to remove up to 10m² of asbestos. The Act does not apply to home occupants who conduct 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) work on their own homes. However, Worksafe recommends that person undertaking a business or undertaking (PCBUs) with training and experience in work involving asbestos should conduct this work, because of the health risks involved. Note: Landlords must comply with the Act and Regulations.

Whether a non-registered or a qualified specialist removes the asbestos Council still needs confirmation that the site is safe for our employees to enter. For this an asbestos clearance certificate needs be supplied before inspections can take place. Given that some construction may be undertaken prior to the asbestos being removed we need to know when and how this is managed via an Asbestos Management Plan.

Recap

To recap, if undertaking alterations or additions on buildings pre-2000, Council need to know whether asbestos is present in the area where work is to take place. This is provided in form of an Asbestos Survey. If asbestos is present and being removed or disturbed an Asbestos Management Plan is also required. Once the asbestos has being removed an Asbestos Clearance Certificate needs to be supplied before Council will carry out building inspections.

Further guidance can be found at the following links.

[Worksafe -Find out more about managing and working with asbestos.](#)

[Worksafe -Conducting asbestos surveys](#)

[Worksafe - Asbestos Management Guidance and Templates](#)

[Worksafe – Asbestos Removal Certificates](#)

Building Code Changes B1/AS1 – Liquefaction and E3/AS1

Changes are being made by MBIE to support safer and more resilient housing foundations for buildings on liquefaction-prone ground. These changes are proposed to:

- Reduce the likelihood of massive failures of foundations of structures where known liquefaction and lateral spread hazards exist across the country.
- Require specifically designed foundations for buildings on ground that has been identified as prone to liquefaction.
- Ensure new homes are built safely and strongly enough to withstand liquefaction risks.
- Provide clarity to Territorial Authorities (TAs), Building Consent Authorities (BCAs) and engineers when designing for liquefaction-prone ground.

These regulations are already in place in the Canterbury region, and will now be extended to all of New Zealand as of 28th November 2021.

Specifically, the changes include:

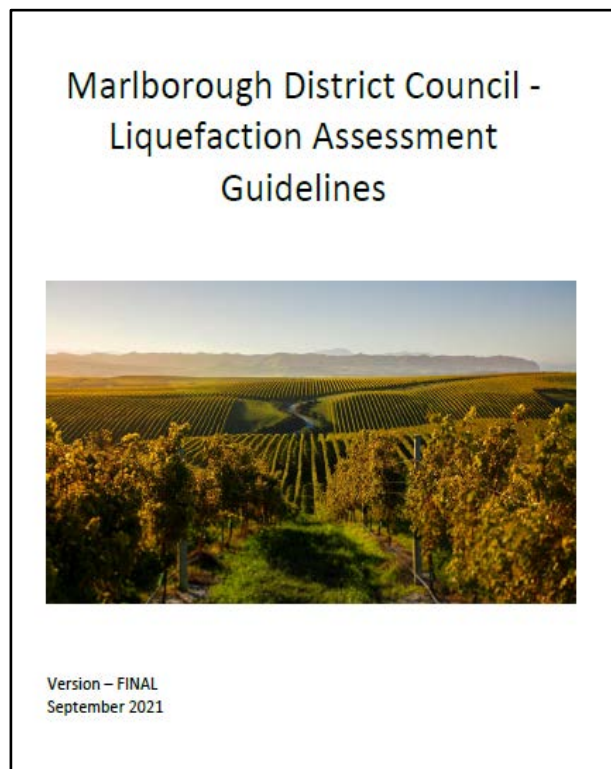
- Limiting the application of the B1 Acceptable Solution B1/AS1 so that it may not be used on ground prone to liquefaction or lateral spreading.
- Limiting the application of B1/AS1 Foundation Design buildings that are on 'good ground' that is not prone to liquefaction or lateral spread. This is currently the case in Canterbury.
- Amending Acceptable Solution B1/AS1 to include the information on the design of foundations in expansive soils that was previously contained in the Simple House Acceptable Solution, and revoking SH/AS1.

This change requires Councils and Territorial Authorities to complete liquefaction mapping to identify where the areas of liquefiable prone soils are. The Marlborough District Council engaged University of Auckland to undertake this task. From the results of this study a report 'Liquefaction Vulnerability Study: Lower Wairau Plains' has been published. This report

identifies potentially liquefiable areas however it does not provide any guidance on how to determine the theoretical liquefaction triggering potential of the site soils, or to predict the likely associated ground deformation, or how to design foundation solutions for sites on potentially liquefiable ground, which will likely meet the performance standards of the Building Code.

To assist stakeholders Council has engaged Fraser Thomas Ltd to write a document called 'Marlborough District Council – Liquefaction Assessment Guidelines'. This document provides guidance on how to determine the theoretical liquefaction triggering potential of the site soils, predict the likely associated ground deformation and how to design foundation solutions for sites on potentially liquefiable ground, which will likely meet the performance standards of the Building Code. The main objectives of this document are to:

- (1) Promote consistency of approach to assessing liquefaction risk in the whole Marlborough region,
- (2) Provide sound guidelines for the determination of the theoretical liquefaction triggering potential of soils, due to seismic loading, to support rational foundation design, which are informed by the latest research and the MBIE Guidelines Modules (1 to 6),
- (3) Provide suitable foundation design solutions that:
 - (i) Take into account the likely future performance of the ground, under seismic loading,



- (ii) Provides MDC with 'reasonable grounds' to be satisfied that the minimum performance standards of the Building Code (Clause B1) are satisfied, which will enable them to grant consent for foundation solutions, sited on potentially liquefiable ground.

Both these documents will be available on the Marlborough District Council website shortly. A proposed workshop will be held at the end of October with the lead author of the Liquefaction Assessment Guidelines.

Lintel in Internal Load-Bearing Walls

Lintels in internal load bearing walls with openings play an important structural role in the construction of a building. Internal load-bearing walls lintels support another element of the building, such as a roof or a wall on an upper storey and allow the weight to be transferred either side of that opening and then down to the foundations with thickenings.

Specifying the correct lintel size and its fixings is of vital importance for any structural component of a project. However, Building Control has observed several instances where no details have been provided for lintels in internal load-bearing walls.

The truss designer designs the trusses in one program and most of the times cover all the lintel design (internal and external), however at times some of the lintels are not covered by truss designers, or the architect/designer may have chosen to design some of it or may have added an opening at a later stage. This has led to missing information about internal lintels for building consent applications. During consent processing stages, the architect then sizes the lintels and tie-downs from a generic table in NZS3604 (or uses a separate lintel design program), which leads to both designs having no direct relationship. Whilst this method is time-consuming and does produce a design that satisfies code requirements, a far more efficient design (i.e. smaller lintel sizes in many cases) can be found by using a more integrated approach. This will also help builders to reference all the lintel sizes and fixings on one single plan rather than having design information scattered throughout the project documentation. In case the design details are to be located on different plans/documents then it is an absolute must to cross-reference the details on either document.



Building Control encourages architects/designers to clearly mark details for lintels in internal load-bearing walls, and ensure that the design intention is made very clear which may be either by the truss designer or architects themselves or both.

Exempt Building Work

MBIE has recently released an interactive tool to assist the public in deciding whether your building works need a building consent. This tool is largely for homeowners who want to renovate or repair their home. The tool helps you find out if your building work needs a building consent, and what you need to do before starting physical work. This tool is not designed for commercial projects. For anything commercial you should refer directly to the list of building work which doesn't need a building consent on the [Building Performance Website](#).

Although some building work is exempt it still must comply with the Building Code. After the building work is completed, if the building complied with the Building Code immediately before the work commenced, the building must continue to comply.

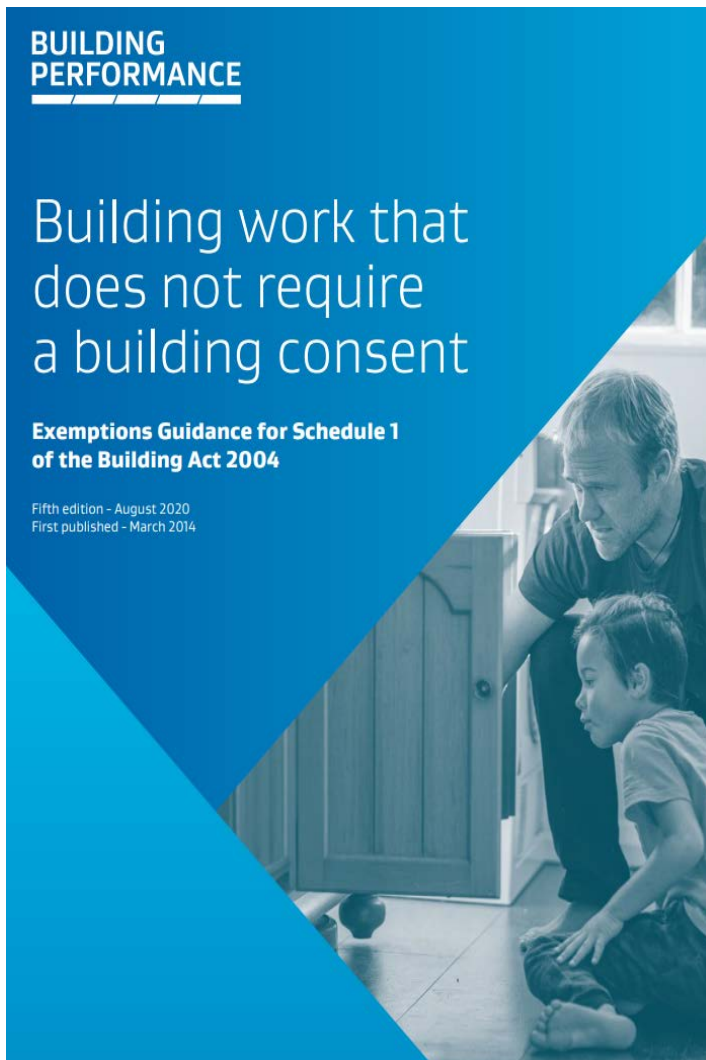
Exempt work must comply with any other relevant legislation, such as the Resource Management Act 1991.

Before starting any exempt building work, it is recommended that you complete the following steps during the planning stage:

1. Read the '[Building work that does not require a building consent](#)' guidance document.
2. Check your plans are compliant with other relevant legislation such as the Resource Management Act 1991, district plans and by-laws.
3. Check your plans and specifications are compliant with the Building Code.

As Built Truss & Frame Plans

The as built trusses often change from what was originally in the consented documentation. Council records need to reflect what was built on site and due to this reason the as built truss plans are required to be submitted to Council so the changes can be documented. If the trusses you are designing/installing have changed from what was originally consented please forward a copy of the as built truss plan to dutybuilder@marlborough.govt.nz



Comings and Goings

Over the last couple of months, the Building Control team has seen a few staff changes. Building Compliance Officer Craig Balaam resigned and moved to Australia to take up a new role in Queensland. We wish Craig all the best.

Alysha Hutchison who was previously the Swimming Pool Compliance Officer has taken over Craig's role as Building Compliance Officer. Deepti Shah who returns from maternity leave will also be taking up a new role as Building Compliance Officer.

David Mehlhopt has joined the Building Control team as a Building Control Officer. David grew up in Blenheim and spent a few years on the end of a hammer as a builder's labourer in between studying architectural draughting in Dunedin and Wellington. David has spent the last 7 years at Wellington City Council processing building consents. David has been involved in a wide range of projects and his expertise will be welcomed by the team in Marlborough.

The move back to the mainland has meant that David, his wife and two young children are a lot closer to family in Blenheim and Tasman. When David is not at work he enjoys dabbling in woodworking and making saw dust in the shed. He is also hoping to dust off the hockey stick and tramping boots again when time allows.



Receiving Future Building Posts

Mailing the Building Post is to be phased out. If you wish to receive future Building Posts please e-mail your details to buildingadmin@marlborough.govt.nz



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