



INFORMATION SHEET

BUILDING SERVICES

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NEW LAWS REGARDING BUILDING PRODUCTS IN QUEENSLAND –

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BUILDERS, SUB-CONTRACTORS, INSTALLERS AND PLUMBERS

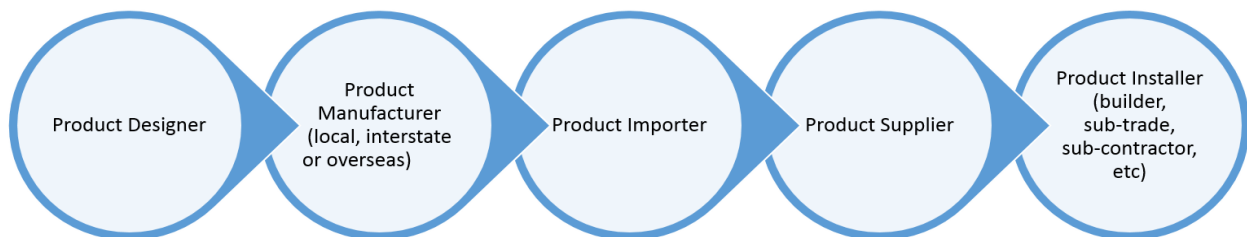
From 1 November new laws regarding non-conforming building products apply to all building projects in Queensland.

The laws create new obligations for people who design, make and sell building products to ensure the products are fit for purpose. This is introduced in the new laws through the concept of a 'chain of responsibility' for building products.

What does this mean?

This means that a number of people are responsible for verifying that building products supplied and used in Queensland buildings are fit for purpose. This includes product designers, product manufacturers, importers, suppliers and installers.

Below is an example of the chain of responsibility under the new laws. Note a person in the chain may fulfil more than one role.



So what has changed?

Under the new laws people in the 'chain of responsibility' are now able to be held accountable for building products that do not conform to the specified standards they purport to (being a non-conforming building product) or if they are not the right products for their intended purpose (being a non-compliant use of a building product in accordance with NCC, QDC, Plumbing Regulations, etc.).

What are my responsibilities under the new laws?

The new laws include 'installers' as a person in the chain of responsibility for a building product. 'Installers' therefore would include builders, trades and subcontractors, including plumbers. The responsibilities for each of these groups of people are:

Builders, trades and sub-contractors:

- Builders, trades and sub-contractors, have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure that any product installed in a building is not a non-conforming building product or a non-compliant building product.

This involves the installer taking reasonable steps to ensure the safety and suitability of the building products that they use.

DISCLAIMER - The above is intended to provide general information in summary form. The contents do not constitute specific advice and should not be relied upon as such. Formal specific advice should be sought by members with respect to particular matters before taking action.

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Plumbers:

- Plumbers are also defined as installers so have the same responsibilities.
- The new laws further reinforce that certain products used in a plumbing and drainage installation must have WaterMark Certification, and where they don't and they are required to have this they are considered as a non-conforming building product and subject to the new laws.
- This should reduce the risk of plumbers being requested to install non-WaterMark products as part of a plumbing system, where these are directly sourced by the builder or homeowner.

What if I directly source the products myself rather than through a local supplier?

If a builder, trades or sub-contractors are sourcing the products to be used in the building directly from a manufacturer, as opposed to going through a supplier, they take on additional responsibilities as part of the chain of responsibility.

This may include obtaining and preparing the required information and accountable for the information they prepare and any claims of conformity.

What products do the new laws apply to?

It is unclear in the legislation what products will be directly captured under the new laws. The Act provides the Government the ability to prescribe a list of products in regulation but this has not occurred.

Given there are thousands of products that go into a single building, the notion that the laws apply to each and every product in a building is not realistic nor practical.

Further the suggestion that each and every product needs to have the new '**required information**' and that this is passed on to each person in the supply chain is also not realistic.

Given this uncertainty, HIA considers that the new laws should be treated in a similar manner to the NCC evidence of suitability provisions. These provisions exist so the builder, building certifier, designers, engineers and the like can be provided, upon request, with supporting evidence from the manufacturer, supplier, etc. to demonstrate that a product meets the relevant requirements of the NCC for a particular use.

Therefore the new laws, similar to the NCC evidence of suitability provisions, require some professional judgement by those responsible for building approvals and building work.

Exercising this judgement would likely see a request from builders and sub-contractors for the **required information** for products used for key aspects of the particular building work. The key aspects would likely be those items required to obtain a Form 21 (incl. Form 15, 16 and 17 where applicable) final inspection certificate.

Does the required information need to be physically passed on to the next person in the supply chain?

No.

The information only needs to be readily available and this could mean in electronic form available on the company's website.

Does the required information need to be in a specific form or type?

No.

The required information can be in various forms including a certificate, report, a product technical/data sheet, advertising material, packaging, labels or a mark, etc.

The key is to confirm that the required information provides sufficient detail and certainty about the standards the product meets and how the product should or should not be used.

What information is needed in the required information?

Required information needs to communicate the following:

- The suitability of the product for its intended use,
- Demonstrate the product meets the relevant regulatory provision i.e. the NCC and/or a relevant Australian Standard, the QDC, or other standards,
- The conditions and circumstances in which the product can be used, e.g. internal wet areas in buildings.
- Instructions on how the product should be installed.
- Any limitations on the use of the product.

Can I rely on the information provided by someone further up the supply chain?

Yes and No.

The new laws require that people in the chain of responsibility are responsible for the accuracy of their product information and representations about their products.

However, the laws place a duty on people in the chain of responsibility, when provided with information on the product from another person in the chain, that they 'satisfy' themselves 'as far as reasonably practicable' that the product is not a non-conforming or non-compliant building product.

HIA's advice on this matter is that similar to current building approval compliance requirements an installer (builder, trade contractor, or other) cannot be expected to be a product expert and should be able to rely on the information received from the manufacturer or supplier. However, caution needs to be exercised on what information is taken as acceptable.

Further information?

The new legislation and Code of Practice can be found on the Queensland Department of Housing's website and downloaded by clicking [here](#) .

The fact sheet, FAQ and other information pieces produced by the QBCC can be downloaded by clicking [here](#) .

HIA has also prepared a series of information sheets to assist members understand their responsibilities under the new laws this includes:

- Dedicated guidance outlining and clarifying the responsibilities for installers (including builders and sub-contractors) and plumbers.
- Information on the new QBCC inspector powers & QBCC Workplace Health and Safety reporting obligations.

These information sheets can be downloaded by clicking [here](#) .

As more information is made available from the Queensland government, these sheets will be updated.

HIA members can contact HIA's Building Services or Workplace Services staff for more information on 1300 650 620 or hia_technical@hia.com.au