

DIY, but build it right

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You can be part of New Zealand's long established "DIY" (do-it-yourself) building tradition, so long as you meet the Building Code requirements and get the right consents and permissions.

Traditionally an owner-builder is a person (individual) who does building work on their own home or holiday home. Often this work is done over a period of many years, incrementally, whether they are building from scratch or making extensions or alterations to an existing house. Suitably skilled owner builders do critical and complex work themselves. Those who are less skilled often hire builders to assist them to do the complex work (including hiring a designer to prepare plans).

If you are an owner-builder, you can carry out most building work on your home (including holiday home) provided you:

- meet the requirements of the Building Code
- obtain any necessary building consent or permits before starting work.

Your building consent is confirmation that, if built to the approved plans, the building will meet all requirements and be safe and healthy. It includes, as a requirement, a series of inspections during the process and final sign-off.

An owner-builder can also do work classified as restricted building work. This is work that is critical to the structure or durability of a building. As with other work, you need to work to the Building Code and obtain any necessary building consent from your council. You need to apply for an owner-builder exemption at the same time.

If you are hiring somebody to do or supervise restricted building work they need to be a licensed building practitioner.

There is some specialist work that you cannot do and will need to hire a professional:

- plumbing
- gasfitting
- drainlaying
- electrical work.

Minor renovation work like painting or building a low deck is exempt from the need to get a building consent.

Check if you need consents

Learn what building work needs a consent, and what may be exempt.

Check if you need consents is essential before you start work (<https://www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/planning-a-successful-build/scope-and-design/check-if-you-need-consents/>)

Usually building work done by owner-builders according to the building consent process meets the requirements of the Building Code. This may be because owner-builders recognise the limits of their skills and get professionals to help when needed. They might also have an incentive to do quality work, as they are doing it for themselves.

Related content

[Understand your land so you design well \(https://www.building.govt.nz/getting-started/stages-of-the-building-process/understand-your-land/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/getting-started/stages-of-the-building-process/understand-your-land/)

You can learn the latest about your land, and any requirements you'll need to meet before building.

[Obligations and responsibilities of owner-builders and their building project \(https://www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/planning-a-successful-build/scope-and-design/choosing-the-right-people-for-your-type-of-building-work/owner-builder-obligations/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/planning-a-successful-build/scope-and-design/choosing-the-right-people-for-your-type-of-building-work/owner-builder-obligations/)

If you're an owner-builder, you may be exempt from needing an LBP for your Restricted Building Work.

[Choosing the right people for your type of building work \(https://www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/planning-a-successful-build/scope-and-design/choosing-the-right-people-for-your-type-of-building-work/\)](https://www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/planning-a-successful-build/scope-and-design/choosing-the-right-people-for-your-type-of-building-work/)

Understand who you may need to hire for your building project.



New Zealand Government

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