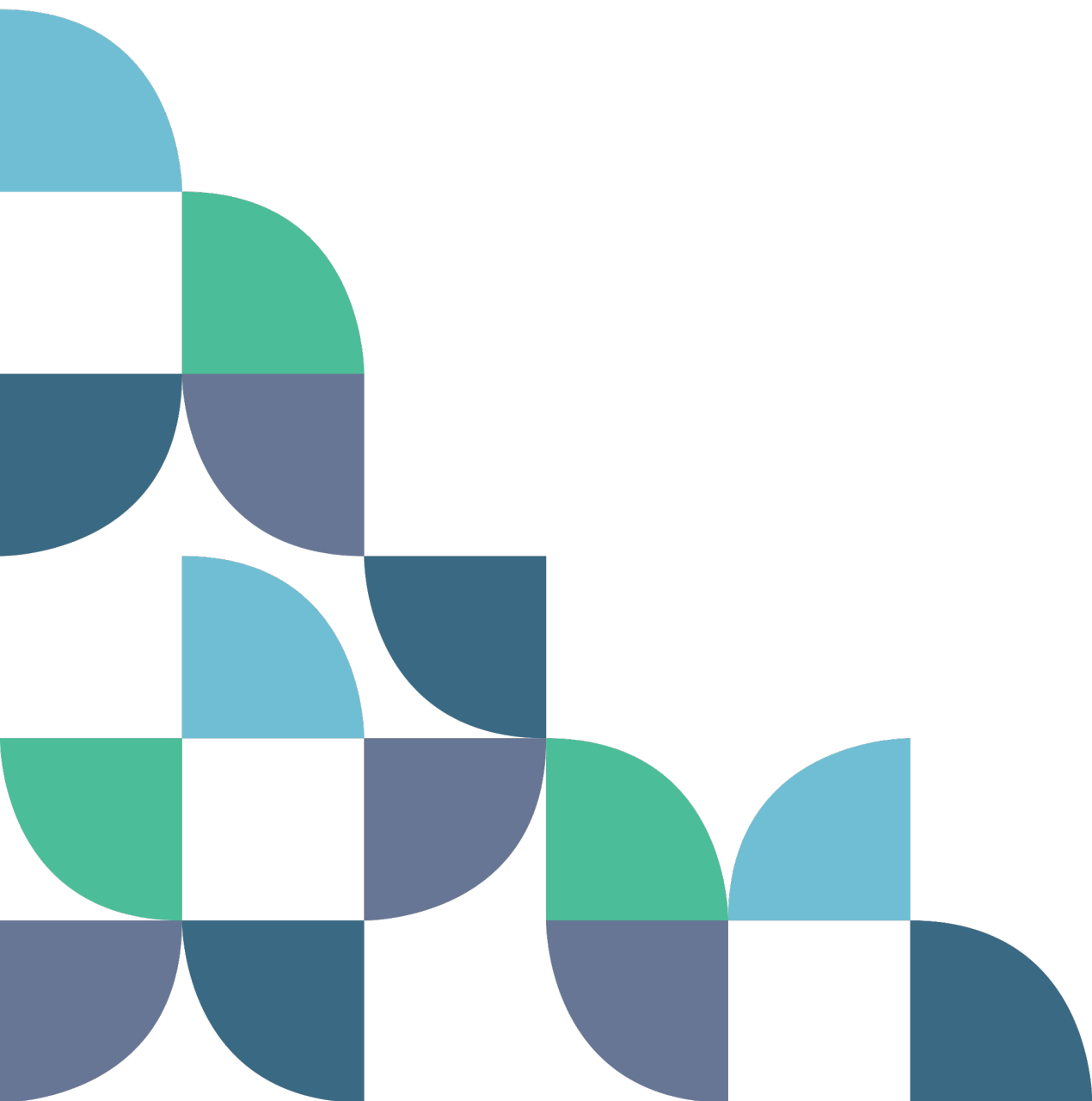


Inspection of waterproofing of wet areas

Director's Guidelines

December 2024 | Version 2.0





I, Robyn Pearce, in my capacity as Director of Building Control, and acting pursuant to section 19(1)(e) of the *Building Act 2016*, hereby make the following Guideline.

Guideline title	Inspection of waterproofing of wet areas
Description	This Guideline provides assistance to Building Surveyors relating to the inspection of waterproofing of wet areas.
Version	2.0
Application	For the purposes of 19(1)(e) of the Act, this Guideline applies from the date of its approval until its revocation.
Date of Director's approval	23 December 2024

Robyn Pearce

Director of Building Control

Consumer Building and Occupational Services
Department of Justice

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Definitions and abbreviations

ABCB means the Australian Building Code Board;

Act means the *Building Act 2016*;

BCR means Building Confidence Report published by the ABCB;

Builder means in relation to building work or demolition work –

- a person engaged, to manage or carry out building work or demolition work, by the owner of premises where the work is to be performed; and
- if such a person does not exist, the owner of such premises;

Building Surveyor is a building services provider who is engaged by the owner of premises to perform or exercise, in respect of the premises, the functions or powers of a building surveyor under the Act;

NCC means the National Construction Code (volumes 1, 2 or 3), published by the Australian Building Codes Board, and as amended from time to time;

Regulations means the Building Regulations 2016;

Waterproof means the property of a material that does not allow water to penetrate through it;

Waterproofing system means a combination of elements that are required to achieve a waterproof barrier including substrate, membrane, bond breakers, sealants, finishes and the like;

Water Resistant means the property of a system or material that restricts water movement and will not degrade under conditions of water;

Wet area means an area within a building supplied with water from a water supply system, which includes bathrooms, showers, laundries, and sanitary compartments and excludes kitchens, bar areas, kitchenettes or domestic food and beverage preparation areas;

Wet area work means work involving application of methods or products to ensure that wet areas are either:

- Water-resistant; or
- Waterproof.

Document status

The amendments to Regulation 18 of the Building Regulations 2016 listing additional mandatory notifications stages, including waterproofing of wet areas, apply as of 1 October 2024.

Section 19 of the Act stipulates the Director of Building Control may make or adopt guidelines. These guidelines have been drafted in accordance with the Act.

This Guideline is intended as a reference for building professionals seeking guidance on the process for the mandatory notification stage for waterproofing of wet areas. These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the NCC and AS3740. As this document is provided for guidance, this Guideline does not override the NCC.

Background

The Building Confidence Report commissioned by the Australian Government in 2017 highlighted the need for more stringent building control measures around specific building elements, including though not limited to waterproofing of wet areas. Subsequently, the Tasmanian Government adopted these recommendations, which have been legislated under the *Residential Building (Miscellaneous Consumer Protection Amendments) Act 2023*.

Water ingress into a building's fabric, from wet areas such as bathrooms, toilets, and laundries, can cause serious building damage, including decay of structural elements. Failure of a waterproofing system can also trigger adverse health impacts, arising from the growth of mould and mildew.

Poor workmanship and/or incorrect material selection may not become apparent until long after work has been completed. This highlights the vital importance of correct waterproofing installation to protect buildings and its occupants from adverse effects.

The Regulations provide a list of critical stages of construction where a mandatory notification must be made to the Building Surveyor, prior to works progressing beyond that stage. This notification allows the Building Surveyor an appropriate period to undertake sufficient visual inspections.

While the compliance and integrity of installed waterproofing elements is solely the responsibility of the Builder, a visual inspection undertaken by the Building Surveyor for the purpose of the Act, serves as evidence that works are likely to comply, based on the representative standard of work inspected.

Scope

This Guideline provides recommendations applicable to the inspection of waterproofing of wet areas within buildings of all classes defined within the NCC.

Works deemed low risk work do not trigger mandatory reporting requirements and are not the intended subject of this document.

Refer to Director's Determination - Categories of Building and Demolition Work for further clarification.

Notwithstanding the above, nothing in this Guideline negates the requirement for all building work to be designed, approved, and constructed in compliance with the Act and NCC.

Mandatory notification requirements

In accordance with the Regulations, a Builder must provide notification to the Building Surveyor a minimum of two business days prior to a mandatory notification stage being reached.

A Builder must not perform work, or cause or allow any work to be performed, that is likely to obstruct the inspection or make an inspection more difficult.

In accordance with regulation 18 of the Regulations, a person is not permitted to proceed past a mandatory notification stage of work –

- if the work is building work, until the relevant building surveyor has consented to the work proceeding; or
- if the work is plumbing work, until the relevant permit authority has consented to the work proceeding; or
- if the relevant building surveyor, or relevant permit authority, does not perform an inspection of the work within the prescribed period as required under the Act, until after the expiry of the prescribed period; or
- if a notice, order or direction is made under the Act as part of an inspection of the mandatory notification stage, until the order, notice or direction has been –
 - complied with to the satisfaction of the person who issued the notice or order or made the direction; or
 - revoked; or
- if no notice, order or direction is made under the Act in respect of the mandatory notification stage, until the prescribed period in which the inspection may be performed under the Act has expired.

Where a Building Surveyor issues approval to proceed without conducting an inspection, a record must be made detailing the reason for not inspecting, and any other certification relied upon to indicate likely compliance. Additionally, any inspections not carried out should be listed in the Certificate of Final Inspection (Form 12) issued by the Building Surveyor on completion of work.

Despite this provision, a Building Surveyor may inspect or cause to inspect work at any time. This includes invasive, or destructive work to enable inspection, should there be sufficient reason to suspect work has not been installed to a satisfactory standard.

It is an offence under the Act for a Builder to allow work to proceed beyond a mandatory notification stage without authorisation.

Inspection of waterproofing in wet areas

At the point of issuing a Certificate of Likely Compliance, the Building Surveyor will specify the required elements that form a mandatory notification stage for that project.

These stages may be determined based on a combination of the following:

- complexity of the project;
- size of the project;
- class of building;
- risk of failure;
- any other reason deemed appropriate by the Building Surveyor.

Inspections of waterproofing of wet areas are recommended for all buildings, regardless of class or use.

Despite the nomination of set mandatory notification stages, a Building Surveyor may additionally inspect works at any stage of construction.

Inspection rate

In line with the ABCB Mandatory inspections – Model guidance on BCR Recommendation 18, the recommended minimum rate of inspection of waterproofing of wet areas is as follows:

- NCC Class 1 & 10 – 50% of all wet areas;
- NCC Class 2 to 9 – 30% of all wet areas per storey.

This rate is provided as a baseline suggestion, the actual rate of inspection can be adjusted to reflect the complexity or volume of the works.

What to inspect

The additional mandatory notification stage under regulation 18 of the Building Regulations 2016 is for the inspection of waterproofing of wet areas.

The recommended critical point of inspection of waterproofing of wet areas is:

- Following application of the waterproofing membrane, prior to installation of floor coverings.

It is recommended that the Building Surveyor inspects an appropriate representative sample of each type of waterproofing system used on every project.

The logistics, practicality, and necessity of the above recommendations are determined at the discretion of the Building Surveyor.

Understandably, some waterproofing system elements cannot be inspected on the application of the waterproof membrane, such as falls to floor wastes and the like. These elements should be inspected by the Building Surveyor during the occupancy inspection.

Records to be kept by the Building Surveyor

In accordance with appropriate standards of professional practice and facilitating auditing of the inspection functions performed, records of inspections and other evidence relied upon should be recorded. This includes any directions for rectification issued from an inspection.

All records of inspection are to be kept along with any other documents associated with the Certificate of Likely Compliance. These records are to be kept for a minimum of 10 years after the date of completion.

Document development history

Version	Application date	Amendment
2.0	23 December 2024	Approved revised guideline
1.1	13 December 2024	Minor revisions Fixed typographical errors
1.0	27 September 2024	Original release

Disclaimer

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