

# Modifying your Home: Building Consent

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Is it difficult for you to get in and out of or around your home because of your disability? Maybe there are some modifications that could be made to your home to make it easier for you to move around. The Ministry of Health might be able to help fund these modifications.

The type of modifications that the Ministry of Health can help fund for your home will depend on your disability related needs and situation.

An occupational therapist who is a qualified housing assessor can meet with you, and your family or whānau, and look at your home. Together you can discuss how things can be changed to best meet your needs. This might include building modifications to your home. Some building modifications might need a building consent.

## What is a building consent?

A building consent helps your local council or building consent authority make sure that the building work that is planned for your home will be completed safely and soundly and meets all the necessary building codes for your area.

Your local council or building consent authority will need to see:

- a plan for the building modifications
- specifications for the different parts of the modifications
- legal details of your property.

Your local council or building consent authority must approve your building consent before your builder can start modifying your home.

## Modifications that need a building consent

Different councils and building consent authorities have different building consent requirements, standards and fees. However, you might expect to need a building consent for:

- a lift or ramp that is 1.5 metres or higher above the ground or floor level
- a level access shower
- modifications to external walls, doors, load-bearing walls and window frames.

## How to get a building consent

If you have agreed to complete the modifications to your home with a **cost contribution** from the Ministry of Health, you will need to arrange the building consent with your builder.

If you are eligible for **full funding** from the Ministry of Health and your request for modifications to your home has been finalised, the Ministry of Health's housing modification funding managers Accessable or Enable New Zealand will organise your building consent.

### Four steps to getting a building consent through Accessable or Enable New Zealand

1. Your housing assessor discusses your modifications with Accessable or Enable New Zealand, and Accessable or Enable New Zealand work out if the modifications need a building consent.
2. If so, they arrange with your builder or building consultant to apply to your local council or building consent authority for the building consent.
3. Your builder or building consultant comes to your home and works with you to complete the application for your building consent.
4. Once the building consent has been approved, Accessable or Enable New Zealand send you a letter telling you that your home modifications can start. They also send a 'works order' to the builder or consultant and let them know to arrange a suitable time with you to start work.

## How long does it take to get a building consent?

Different local councils or building consent authorities around the country have different processes that they have to work through to approve building consents. Accessable or Enable New Zealand will keep in touch with the builder or consultant and the council or local building consent authority to make sure that your building consent is processed as quickly as possible.

## Do you have to pay anything?

The cost of getting the building consent is included in the total cost of the modifications to your home for Ministry of Health funding. You will only need to pay directly for the building consent if the Ministry of Health is providing a cost contribution to your home's modifications.

# For more information about building consents

If you live:

- **in Auckland or Northland:**  
contact **Accessible**  
Freephone 0508 001 002  
Email **info@accessible.co.nz**
- **anywhere else in New Zealand:**  
contact **Enable New Zealand**  
Freephone 0800 17 1981  
Email: **enable@enable.co.nz**

Or you can contact your local council or building consent authority directly.



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