



Building newsflash number 426

Inspecting single detached class 1a and class 10 buildings and structures and updated inspection guidelines

Purpose

To remind building certifiers of the inspection requirements for single detached class 1a buildings and class 10 buildings or structures and to advise that a new version of the class 1 and 10 inspection guidelines has been published.

Background

Prior to the commencement of the Building Regulation 2006 (BR) on 1 September 2006, section 87C of the Standard Building Regulation 1993 (SBR) only required final stage inspections to be undertaken by a licensed building certifier. For all other stages, a competent person, who may not necessarily have been a building certifier, could inspect the building work and provide a certificate of inspection for the whole stage.

In developing the BR, the footing stage was recognised as one of the most critical stages of construction. This was because the footing stage contained a number of aspects that could have a significant impact on the overall construction. For example, the foundation material must be carefully checked to ensure it reflects any soil testing profiles for the site. The placement of steel reinforcing needs to strictly comply with the approved design. If any critical aspects are not properly inspected there is potential for significant structural defects to appear after construction of the house has been completed.

Another important aspect to inspect at the footing stage is the siting of the proposed building on the lot. Buildings and structures must be sited strictly in accordance with the approvals, including both the planning (if relevant) and building approvals. This ensures boundary clearances are correct and the proposed building does not encroach over easements, sewers or other infrastructure on the land.

Given the importance of these considerations, the remade BR included provisions requiring a licensed building certifier to inspect the footing stage and personally attest to compliance. In developing the BR, key building industry stakeholders were consulted on this issue and it was accepted a building certifier should inspect and certify this stage to the exclusion of other competent persons who may not be building certifiers. Requirements for licensed building certifiers to inspect footings were then included in the BR, in addition to the previous requirement for only licensed building certifiers to inspect and certify the final stage.

Recently, industry stakeholders have requested advice about who must inspect the footing and final stage for a single detached class 1a building and the final stage for a class 10 building or structure.

Legislation

Building Act 1975

Building Regulation 2006

Standard Building Regulation 1993 (expired and replaced by the BR)



Common questions and answers

Who can carry out inspections at the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building and the final stage for a class 10 building or structure?

Under section 30 of the BR, the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building and the final stage for a class 10 building or structure must be inspected by a licensed building certifier. The building certifier can be the certifier for the subject building work or another licensed building certifier.

Can a competent person, who is not a building certifier, do the inspection for the footing or final stages for a single detached class 1a building or the final stage for a class 10 building or structure and sign a certificate of inspection for the stage?

No. Section 21 of the BR prohibits a competent person, unless they are a building certifier, from signing a certificate of inspection for the footing or final stage. Similarly, section 30 of the BR requires the inspection for the footing and final stage to be undertaken by a licensed building certifier only. A competent person may give a building certifier inspection help for any aspects making up the footing or final stage, but a licensed building certifier must still inspect the footing and final stage.

Can a building certifier rely on certificates from competent persons for aspects of the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building and the final stage for a class 10 building or structure?

Yes. A building certifier who allows a competent person to provide them with inspection help for aspects of the footing or final stage can rely on certificates for those aspects. However, building certifiers are still required to inspect the building work for the footing and final stage, even if another competent person has inspected all aspects of the stage.

What are the aspects of the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building and the final stage for a class 10 building or structure?

The aspects of the footing and final stage are set out in the guidelines for inspection of class 1 and 10 buildings and structures.

Do the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building and the final stage for a class 10 building or structure require a physical on-site inspection by a building certifier?

Yes. Section 31 of the BR requires inspections to be carried out under best industry practice. While the term 'best industry practice' is not defined in the BR, it has been included to outline the minimum expectations for carrying out inspections. Best industry practice generally relates to an accepted practice within an industry. In the context of a person being required to 'inspect' and personally sign a certificate, accepted practice in building industry for an 'inspection' of building work would be for it to be carried out by the relevant practitioner physically visiting a site to conscientiously view aspects of construction. Further, given the complexities involved in the construction process, best industry practice would indicate that a physical on-site viewing of elements of building work for compliance with the approval documentation is required.

When must a building certifier visit the site to inspect the footing stage for a single detached class 1a building?

The building certifier must ensure the footing stage is inspected at a time agreed by the builder. In giving notice to the building certifier, builders can choose to factor in longer lead times to minimise the risk of delays in the construction process, such as concrete pours.

For example, a builder may give the building certifier several days notice for the footing stage to allow plenty of time for the certifier to schedule in the inspection. If the building certifier is



using a competent person to inspect aspects of the footing stage, the certifier may choose to attend the site after the footings are excavated, but before they are completed. For example, the building certifier may inspect the non-structural aspects of the footing stage such as boundary clearances and levels, and use a registered professional engineer (structural) to inspect the structural aspects when they are complete.

Can cadet building certifiers have a role in inspections for the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building or the final stage for a class 10 building or structure?

Yes. Under sections 30 and 32 of the BR, a licensed building certifier must inspect the footing and final stage and sign the certificate of inspection. Under part 5A of the BR, a cadet building certifier can assist a supervising building certifier in performing their functions, such as assisting with inspecting aspects of the footing or final stage, but a licensed building certifier must still attend the site to inspect the footing and final stages. If a cadet building certifier assists a supervising building certifier, the supervising certifier remains responsible for the function.

Is there any provision for exemption from inspection of the footing and final stages for a single detached class 1a building or the final stage for a class 10 building or structure?

Yes. For single detached class 1a buildings and class 10 buildings or structures, section 25 of the BR allows a local government to declare by resolution localities and forms of buildings or structures in its area exempt from inspection at a stage (including the footing or final stages). For example, a local government may resolve to exempt very remote localities of its area. However, a resolution can only be made if the local government is satisfied that not inspecting the stage will not adversely affect public safety, and a resolution cannot be made for swimming pools or pool fences.

Guidelines for inspection of class 1 and 10 buildings and structures

A new version of the guidelines for inspection of class 1 and 10 buildings and structures has been published on the department's website at www.dip.qld.gov.au. The guidelines are made under section 258 of the BA. Building certifiers are reminded that, under section 133A of the BA, they must have regard for the guidelines in performing their functions under the BA.

Under section 26 of the BR, a person inspecting and certifying aspects of assessable building work covered by the guidelines is taken to have complied with part 6 of the BR if they inspect and certify the work as required under the guidelines.

Contact for further information

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