

OWNER BUILDERS

The rules have changed slightly for Owner Builders under the Building Act 2016.

- To be an owner builder an applicant must satisfy the following criteria:
- An owner builder needs to reapply for owner builder status for each separate project they do.
- A project may be building a house, or extending an existing dwelling.
- A person who wants to be an owner builder should apply to Licensing.
- The owner builder must also apply for a building permit for each project they undertake. This is regardless of the risk category which would be applied to the work if it was undertaken by a licensed builder.
- All work undertaken by an owner builder is automatically permit building work.

Applying for an owner builder permit

- Owner Builder Permits are issued under the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*.
- Only individual “natural” persons who own the land and premises may apply for an owner builder permit.
- At least one owner must undertake the approved Tasmanian Owner Builder Training Course (mandatory from the 1 September 2013). This course must be successfully completed within 12 months prior to the date of an owner builder permit application.
- There are three Owner Builder Responsibilities approved courses. Every applicant must also hold a [Construction Induction card \(White Card\)](#).
- An applicant for an owner builder permit must have engaged a licensed building surveyor in respect of the work to be performed as an owner builder.
- An applicant is to hold an insurance policy to provide indemnity in respect to personal and property damage caused by an occurrence in building work carried out or managed by the holder.
- The insurance policy is to include construction liability cover for the damage to existing property where the owner builder permit holder has physical or legal control of premises.
- The amount and period of insurance is to be not less than \$5 million and is to be held prior to the commencement of any building works and is to continue until a Certificate of Completion (building work) is granted. An application for an owner builder permit is to be lodged at a Service Tasmania shop and the owner builder permit fee paid.
- The Administrator of Occupational Licensing will check the applicant’s eligibility and if approved, will issue a permit.
- A letter of approval with a permit number is issued to the approved applicant.

Fee

Owner Builder Permit Fee: \$367.20

Owner Builder FAQ from 1 January 2017

Are there new restrictions on work of owner builders?

Yes, the biggest change is that an owner builder permit will only be issued for work on a residential building (detached dwelling or a conjoined unit). Permission won't be issued for any work on commercial buildings. Other changes include:

- Only two owner builder projects are allowed in a ten-year period. However those two projects could include two entirely new dwellings.
- Owner builders cannot keep performing more work on what they have already constructed. Each new building project must receive a new owner builder permit.
- There is a fee for each owner builder permit (registration) issued.
- Reintroducing owner builder insurance. This insurance was discontinued in 2008 when Housing Indemnity Insurance ceased (this will only cover the work of the owner builder and is not re-introducing home-owner warranty insurance).
- Fee and insurance requirements for owner builders will be the same as a licensed builder.

Does this affect farmers?

- These changes won't have any impact on farmers, as farm sheds of all sizes are already exempt from owner builder registration.
- The Government has also simplified the building approvals process for farm buildings, so there will be much less regulation that primary producers need to comply with.

Does this restrict "home handyman" projects?

- Not at all, as smaller sheds and outbuildings (Low Risk Buildings) are already exempt from owner builder registration.
- The *Building Act 2016* further simplifies the building approvals process and will be of great benefit to homeowners and handypersons. A homeowner will be able to build:
 - a shed, garage or carport up to 36m²
 - a porch or veranda up to 9m², or a deck up to 1m high
 - a temporary swimming pool with a child safety fence up to 9m²
 - perform maintenance or repairs on a dwelling using similar materials as those replaced.

This and more may be done without needing council building approval.

What are other requirements of owner builders?

- Limit of two projects in 10 years (this only covers work on habitable buildings).
- Complete an owner builder awareness course (same as present)
- Obtain a White Card for health and safety construction training (same as present)
- Individual "natural" persons who own the land must be the applicants as property held in the name of a company cannot receive an owner builder permit (same as present).

Administration of owner builder permits:

- Owner builder permits will be issued under the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*. The new *Building Act 2016* contains no licensing or registration provisions.