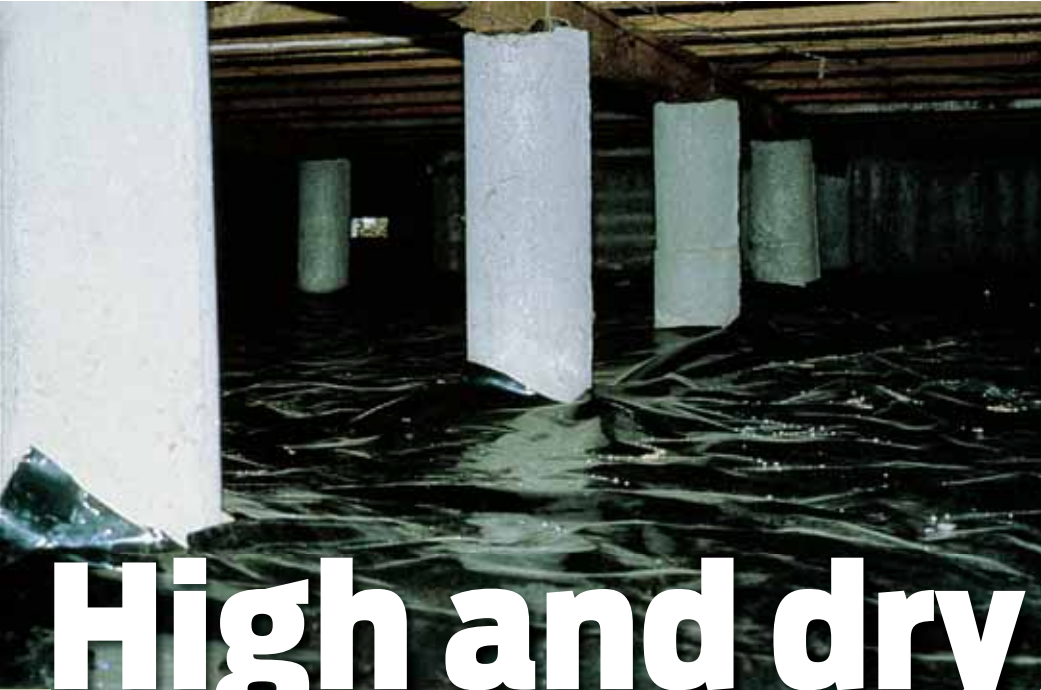


builder's mate



High and dry

Laying polythene sheeting on the ground under a house can help reduce moisture problems both under the home and inside it.

Around 1.2 million New Zealand houses have suspended timber ground floors.

A surprising amount of moisture is released from the ground, even where the ground doesn't seem especially wet. On average, 0.4 litres of water can evaporate from 1 m² of ground in 24 hours – that's 60 litres per day on average for a 150 m² house. If this moisture accumulates under a house, it can cause damage outside and inside the building and affect the health of the occupants.

BRANZ house condition surveys have found that most older houses don't meet current requirements for subfloor ventilation.

NZS 3604:2011 *Timber-framed buildings* requires subfloor spaces to be ventilated. Adequate ventilation is achieved with a minimum of five air changes per hour (10 for wet sites). This can be achieved by:

- not less than 3500 mm² of clear open area for every 1 m² of floor area
- ventilation openings high in the subfloor space, near to the underside of bearers
- no part of the subfloor more than 7.5 m from a ventilation opening.

If ventilation holes are blocked – which often happens with plants or banked-up gardens or items stored under the house – they should be cleared. >

INDUSTRY NEWS

New BRANZ websites

If you need information about building a weathertight home, fixing a leaky home or home maintenance, check out two new BRANZ websites. Both sites are packed with illustrations and useful information. Visit them at:

- www.weathertight.org.nz
- www.maintainingmyhome.org.nz

The \$32 billion boom

A report released in December 2013 predicts that construction activity will grow by 10% a year, peaking in 2016. Nearly \$32 billion of construction activity is forecast. Housing demand in Auckland will more than double, says the report from the Building and Construction Productivity Partnership.

Housing WOF tests under way

A project aimed at making rental housing safer is conducting 'warrant of fitness' field tests of 125 rental properties. The project involves Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin Councils, ACC, New Zealand Green Building Council and University of Otago (Wellington). Tests run to the end of February, with results published in March.

WIN!

A DeWalt multi-tool and accessory kit



0800 948 665
www.thetoolshed.co.nz



worth \$369!



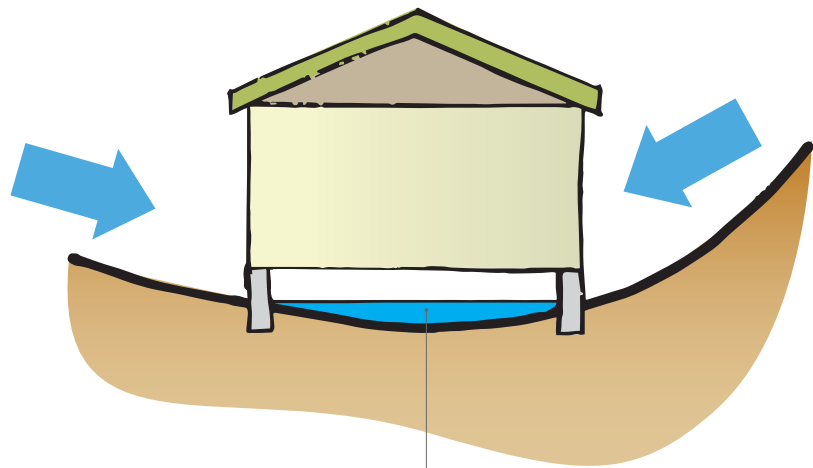
A good way to reduce moisture levels is to install polythene sheeting that is at least 0.25 mm thick over the ground under a house. This vapour barrier will restrict the evaporation of moisture from the ground into the subfloor space.

For the vapour barrier to be effective:

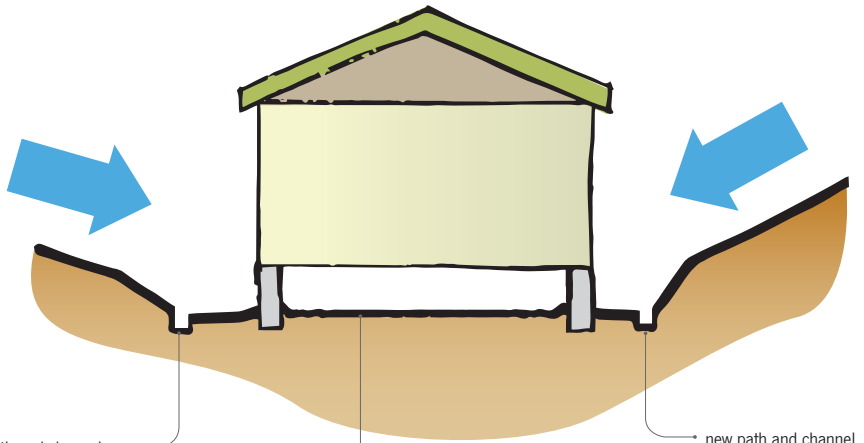
- any leaks from water or waste pipes, wet areas, cladding and so on must be dealt with before the material is laid
- check there is no surface water flowing under the building – rain should drain away from the house (see drawing)
- the ground under the house should be shaped so no surface water accumulates on top of the vapour barrier
- the vapour barrier should completely cover the soil
- adjacent sheets should be lapped a minimum of 75 mm
- sheets should be butted up to surrounding foundation walls and piles
- the sheets should be weighted down to avoid being moved by the ventilating air movement.



Fix any plumbing leaks before laying polythene.



existing situation – water accumulating in natural depression



new path and channel

hollow filled in if possible

new path and channel

Reshaping the ground contour may be necessary.



Mouth piece

It's hard work delivering projects to timeframes, budgets and specifications, co-ordinating all the inputs, and managing ACC, GST, H&S and so on. It's doubly hard doing all this on your own. The majority of complaints about LBPs have involved designers and tradespeople working in isolation.

Here are three things to think about as the new year begins:

Look for opportunities to 'talk shop' with industry friends and colleagues, and use them as a 'sounding board' for problems and ideas.

People who have trained under a different employer, worked in a different part of the country, or done different work to you will often approach a task or solve a problem differently to the way that you do.

Find a local person with management experience who is happy to 'give something back' to the community and meet them every few weeks for a coffee.

Many building challenges are business-related. An experienced manager will have insights into things

like pricing, marketing, cash-flow, staff management and client relationships. It won't matter if your mentor doesn't have building experience – it might even be an advantage. An experienced manager can help you to see the building process from your client's perspective.

Think about joining an industry association.

Industry associations develop resources (e.g. contracts) for their members and filter and interpret information so that members know what to pay attention to. Many also provide advice about disputes. Sensible advice from someone 'on your side' might be the difference between a problem being resolved or escalating into something major. An association can provide opportunities for talking shop and getting perspectives from fellow practitioners. With luck, an experienced member might agree to become your mentor.

Mark Scully

Registrar of Licensed Building Practitioners
MBIE

New law affects all residential builders



All residential builders and their clients are affected by changes to the Building Act 2004 that became law in November 2013. A builders' fact sheet is available at www.dbh.govt.nz/building-amendment-act-2013.

Immediate changes introduced by the Building Amendment Act 2013 include:

- higher penalties for work done without a building consent
- changes to the work that doesn't require a consent.

Major new consumer protections will come into force from late 2014.

Information disclosure is mandatory

For building work above a certain sum or at a client's request, the builder must provide certain information – probably things like whether the builder is an individual or a company, whether they have been involved in any disputes and the skills, qualifications, and licensing status of workers.

Written contracts become mandatory

Building work over a minimum sum (likely to be \$20,000) must have a written contract.

There are implied warranties in work on household units

In residential contracts, the following warranties are taken to form part of the contract:

- Work will be done competently.
- Materials will be fit for purpose.
- Work will meet all legal requirements.
- Work will be done with reasonable care and skill and completed by the date (or within the period) specified in the contract.

The client may require the builder to fix the work and repair or replace defective materials. If the builder does not fix things within a reasonable time, the client may have the work done by someone else at the builder's expense or cancel the contract.

Builders must fix defects up to 1 year after completion

Within 1 year of the completion of building work, if a defect is found and it can be remedied, clients can notify the builder and ask them to remedy the defect.

Information must be provided on completion

As soon as practicable after completing a residential job, the builder must give the client documentation listed in regulations – probably things such as guarantees and maintenance requirements.

This is a brief summary only. For more details, go to the website address given above.

build

“Do you get your free Build magazine?”



All building contractors who are in the business of building and have paid a Building Research Levy in the current year can receive BRANZ's *Build* magazine for free. This Levy is paid as part of the building consent fee on all construction projects over \$20,000. If you are missing out on your free copy of *Build*, call 0800 80 80 85 (press 2) or email vera.chan@branz.co.nz.



ADVISORY HELPLINES

For the building and construction industry:

0800 80 80 85

For the homeowner and public enquiries:

0900 5 90 90

Calls cost \$1.99 per minute plus GST

WWW.BRANZ.CO.NZ

Competition

Here's a tool.



What is it?

Win!

A DeWalt multi-tool and accessory kit



Worth \$369!

The powerful new 300w DeWalt multi-tool comes with a 37-piece accessory kit. Quick accessory change – no hex key required. Variable speed trigger. Just \$369 at The ToolShed.

The prize is provided courtesy of The Tool Shed.

All you need to do to win is tell us the name of the mystery tool (above).

Email your answer to buildersmate@branz.co.nz. Put "February Competition" in the subject line. The message should include your answer, your name, postal address and phone number. One entry per entrant please.

Don't forget to tell us where you picked up your copy of *Builder's Mate*! The winner will be the first correct entry drawn at 9 am on Friday 7 March 2014. Details will be posted on the BRANZ Ltd website (www.branz.co.nz) and in the next edition of *Builder's Mate* due out on 1 April 2014.



Winner of the December competition was Jarrath Chapman of Hamilton. Jarrath wins a Hitachi concrete and fibre-cement disc cutter worth \$349. The mystery tool was a cross line laser.

Terms and conditions:

Entry is open to all New Zealand residents except employees and immediate families of BRANZ and The Tool Shed shops. The competition will close on Friday 7 March 2014. The prize is not transferable for cash. The judge's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

What's wrong in these PICTURES?



1 DECK RAILING

2 PILES UNDER HOUSE

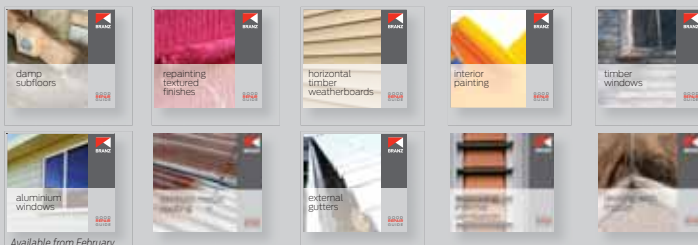
2. No evidence of braced or correctly connected anchor piles. Retrofitting of bracing between piles and bearers or joists is recommended, especially in earthquake-prone regions.

1. The railings are too far apart. Where it is possible to fall 1 m or more from a deck, railings must be no more than 100 mm apart.

ANSWERS



step-by-step instructions on repairing NZ homes



GOOD REPAIR GUIDE

The BRANZ Good Repair Guide series is packed with numerous drawings and photos, explaining the causes of the most common problems in NZ homes, and provides the building professional with practical, hands-on and blow-by-blow descriptions of how to deal with a wide range of repair issues.

To order your books visit www.branz.co.nz or call 0800 80 80 85 (press 2)

Although BRANZ has made every attempt to ensure the accuracy of its information, it provides generic advice only, and BRANZ accepts no liability for any loss or damage incurred. Opinions expressed in *Builder's Mate* do not necessarily reflect the views of BRANZ.

Standards referred to can be purchased from Standards New Zealand. Tel: 04 498 5991 or www.standards.co.nz.

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