

GUIDELINE

JANUARY 2004



FREE MONTHLY UPDATE ON BUILDING ISSUES PREPARED BY BRANZ
AND FUNDED BY THE BUILDING RESEARCH LEVY

MAINTAINING STANDARDS

Very soon the building industry will be caught up in another round of uncertainty and anxiety, at a time when it should be showing leadership and confidence. The reason? After considerable time and debate new Standards have been published which alter previous practices involving the preservation and use of timber.

These Standards give new and clear guidance and confirm the messages that have been conveyed to the industry during numerous breakfast meetings, seminars and – in the case of BRANZ – recent issues of BUILD magazine.

So why should there be so much uncertainty and confusion? Because some in our industry prefer to have their professional judgment influenced by hearsay and opinion instead of buying the appropriate documents and discovering the information for themselves. As a result, misinformation and half-truths abound.

For those involved in specifying timber for construction, the best way to ensure that you understand the considerable changes that have taken place, is to buy these new Standards, read them and apply them.

REDUCING THE DEPTH OF THE RISK POOL (DESIGNERS DESIGN, APPROVERS APPROVE AND BUILDERS BUILD)

There has recently been what some see as pretty extreme stances taken by territorial authorities regarding Compliance Certificates, and the construction methods that they will approve.

What are the risks that need to be assessed when a building consent is considered? Who should mitigate that risk to reasonable levels? Is a prescriptive approach a good and 'safe' way of ensuring that a building will behave the way an owner wishes?

The real risk to a building is that the judgement of its designer has somehow not taken account of where the building is to be built (wind zone, distance from the sea); that the useful nature of the shelter that may be found in its form (overhangs for example) has been ignored, or that its physical characteristics, such as height or other design features, are given inappropriate or scant consideration. Often it comes down to detailing not being adequately defined for the builder.

Most house designs submitted for approval (at least in the main centres) require specific design and should be accompanied by information from the designer that shows sufficient thought and judgement has been given to the design to ensure the building will perform satisfactorily – including that it won't leak.

If the building official, certifier or builder is required to provide such information at any stage then obviously the designer has not done his job.

Making sure the designer provides information that will make the approval process straightforward is more a matter of ensuring that professional responsibilities are not transferred: it is the designer's unwavering responsibility to provide details that show a building can be built and how it will work. The approval process audits and checks the proposed construction, and demands, when necessary, adequate detailing to ensure that both the approving authority and the builder can understand and construct the detail. And the builder builds.

If the process is followed correctly, the flow from building consent, construction to code compliance should be smooth and unremarkable.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM BRANZ

BRANZ is publishing a number of new and revised publications. They include an updated and revised *Good Practice Guide: Stucco*, \$39.95 plus \$4 p&p; the long-awaited *Weathertight Solutions Volume Two: Stucco*, \$85, plus \$8 p&p. Buy both for just \$100 and save \$25! Also look out for the CD rom version of *Weathertight Solutions*: \$35, plus \$4, p&p.

CITE TRAINING COURSES

February, 2004

BRANZ Certificate in Building Controls - Taupo

Week 1: 16-20 February

Week 2: 15-19 March

March, 2004

BRANZ Certificate in Building Compliance for IQPs - Auckland

2-5 March

BRANZ Certificate in Domestic Sprinkler Design (NZQA Approved) - Wellington

23-24 March

For more information on these courses, registration forms, costs and early-bird discounts, visit www.branz.co.nz (CITE Industry Training) or call Fiona McColl, CITE Education Officer, 04-238-1291 or FionaMcColl@branz.co.nz.

BRANZ SUSTAINABILITY SEMINARS

The first seminar series of 2004 on sustainability, the Green Payback, offers practical information on how you and/or your company can benefit. Seminars scheduled throughout the country from March 8 – April 26.

For details contact Gail King (04-237 1170).