

# GUIDELINE

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## H1 again

There is a range of documents and tools including Standards and the BRANZ ALF programme referred to in the new H1 Energy efficiency compliance documents.

In submitting documents for consent, the compliance path used by the designer should be based on one specific method, such as ALF or one of the methods in NZS 4218: 2004, but not a mix and match solution using more than one method.

For climate zones 1 and 2, the new thermal insulation requirements don't become mandatory until later in 2008 (30 June for zone 2 and 30 September for zone 1) and the schedule method of NZS 4218: 2004 can be used as a means of compliance for consents issued up until these dates. Note that NZS 4218: 2004 has some changes from the 1996 version, including a limit on how much glazing is acceptable when using the schedule method.

Our advice, however, is to design to the new requirements for zones 1 and 2 now. For climate zone 3, the requirements for H1 have already changed. Designers must refer to H1/AS1 as it has made a significant number of changes to NZS 4218: 2004.

Other aspects of the revised H1, such as those relating to lighting in commercial buildings, became effective from 30 October regardless of climate zone.

## Concrete floors

In E2/AS1 the method given for measuring the moisture content of concrete floors, before the laying of vinyl flooring or timber overlays, is to use a flooring hygrometer or Edney gauge.

Other measuring devices are not referenced in E2/AS1, and recent experience has shown that the readings given may not accurately represent the actual moisture content of the concrete.

Under E2/AS1 the maximum recommended Edney gauge reading before installing fixed floor coverings is a relative humidity of 75%. (BRANZ recommends 70% for timber due to the hygroscopic nature of the material and its intolerance of slabs that are too wet when the timber or timber composite is laid.)

## Closed subfloors for insulation

A closed subfloor for the design of subfloor insulation in suspended floors is considered by BRANZ to be one that meets the minimum 3500 mm<sup>2</sup> of clear opening per m<sup>2</sup> of floor area using regularly spaced ventilation openings as described in E2/AS1 10.2.5 (b).

A subfloor that is enclosed by timber boards with a 20 mm gap is considered an open subfloor because of the amount of air movement that will occur.

## Underlays – be specific

Consents should not be issued unless the wall, roof and concrete underlays (DPM) are clearly identified (by product name) in the documents supplied – drawings or specification. Builders must then install the materials specified.

Where gable ends are unlined there are specific air barrier performance requirements which only a limited number of flexible wall underlays comply with, so choice is limited.

## Amendments to consent

Where an amendment to a consent is required, it is not just a matter between the builder and the BCA. In a recent case the builder didn't follow the consented documents and the change was noticed by the BCA. The builder took it upon himself to submit the amendment. It was approved by the BCA without reference back to either the designer, other contracted parties or the owner.

Where an amendment to consent is required the designer, builder, other contracted parties, the BCA and the owner must be involved in the loop.

## Unhappy builders

What are the steps builders should take when they are not happy with what has been detailed and/or consented? First, price what is documented but raise (in writing) at that time the issues you have with the design or documentation. Where information is missing, an option is to tag your price to cover the missing information. This will ensure that you are covered if you successfully obtain the work.

## A plea to builders

Please don't ring us to resolve a design issue where the owner or client is not prepared to fairly pay for the designer's time to resolve issues that arise during construction.

## We hear it quite often

A comment we at BRANZ hear frequently is "You guys make the rules". Unfortunately we don't – the sole rule-making body for building is the Department of Building and Housing. We do, however, have an active role in the development of standards and by providing review of regulatory documents – a role the wider industry also has but often fails to embrace.

## Level.org.nz

The BRANZ website [www.level.org.nz](http://www.level.org.nz), "The authority on sustainable building", is being updated on a monthly basis. We recommend bookmarking and regularly visiting the site to keep up-to-date with the new information presented.

## Helpline and seminars

Please do not ring the 0800 helpline for enquiries regarding seminars. Queries for the seminar coordinator can be emailed on [SeminarRegistrations@branz.co.nz](mailto:SeminarRegistrations@branz.co.nz) or call BRANZ on 04 237 1170.

## BRANZ seminars online soon

The H1 seminar currently being presented will be available for viewing online on a pay-per-view basis from early 2008. Full details, including the CPD points for this new format, will be published soon.

### BRANZ Seminars

Receiving great reviews from attendees so far is *Shortening the Odds – reducing your building risk*

Specifically for builders, and to be held in 22 centres nationwide, the focus is on practical building techniques for achieving weathertight construction and so reducing your risk of liability. Solutions for a number of high-risk areas will be covered. Dates in December are: 6 Ellerslie, 10 Christchurch and 11 Timaru. Seminars will be held in March 2008 in New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Nelson, Greymouth, Tauranga, Rotorua, Gisborne and Napier.

### Better building business

In a joint venture with the New Zealand Building Subcontractors' Federation we are presenting a seminar looking at the best ways to manage your building business using the Construction Contracts Act. Presented by Rosemary Hazlewood in the five main centres in March 2008, the seminar will consider various topics including:

- Contracts and tenders
- Handling contract variations and product substitutions
- How the Construction Contracts Act can help you get paid on time.

Attendees will be given templates and tools that they can take away with them and start using immediately.

Visit our website for more details and to register online – [www.branz.co.nz](http://www.branz.co.nz) (click on Seminars).

Wishing all our Guideline readers

A happy and safe festive season!



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