

# builder'smate

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Shorter-term training gets support

The New Zealand Qualifications Authority has introduced 'micro-credentials' into the education and training system. These stand-alone products let people learn specific knowledge and skills in an area such as kitchen installation. They offer an option for people who may not want or be ready for a multi-year apprenticeship.

The Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) has trialled the concept (which it calls 'managed traineeships') and is delighted that NZQA has approved it.

### Building Amendment Bill

Proposed changes to the Building Act 2004 would give local authorities clearer powers to manage buildings after a big earthquake. The changes would also give the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment clearer powers to investigate significant building failures.

### How to find appliances with low running costs

Want to find appliances such as heat pumps or washing machines that use the least power? The new Rightware tool on the Energywise website has the answers. See: [www.energywise.govt.nz/tools/rightware/](http://www.energywise.govt.nz/tools/rightware/)

## ALL DECKED OUT

Open-slatted timber decks have long been a popular feature of New Zealand houses, and there are clear rules around their construction. But beyond the rules, what is an acceptable level of construction quality?

Among other requirements, the Building Act says that building work must be completed "in a proper and competent manner" and "with reasonable care and skill". Where this isn't done, homeowners can call a builder back within 12 months to fix the defects.

When it comes to newly built timber-slat decks, what should homeowners accept, and what qualifies as a defect?

The Ministry of Building, Innovation and Employment gives advice in its publication *Guide to tolerances, materials and workmanship in new residential construction 2015*, available on the website [www.building.govt.nz](http://www.building.govt.nz). BRANZ has also published a lot about timber deck construction in *Build* magazine, books and websites. ➤



**A HiKOKI  
190 mm circular saw  
worth \$199!**

**WIN!**

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[www.thetoolshed.co.nz](http://www.thetoolshed.co.nz)**

## HAMMER 'N' NAILS



## ACCEPTABLE CONSTRUCTION

These features of a new timber-slatted deck are acceptable:

- Framing timber used is the specified grade – typically H3.2 treated SG6 or SG8 radiata pine [wet in service]. The grades are described in NZS 3631:1988 *New Zealand timber grading rules*.
- Timber-slat decking is the specified species – typically radiata pine, kwhiri, vitex (also known as vasa) or cypress species (particularly macrocarpa).
- Timber-slat decking is the specified width, thickness and grade typically for radiata pine dressing (higher quality) or merchantable (lower grade). The terms 'premium' and 'clears' may also be used to describe quality.
- Knots and surface cracks are within the given parameters [size, type] for the specified grade [from NZS 3631:1988] at the time of installation.
- Surface cracks and knot cracks appearing over time are appropriate to the grade of timber installed:
  - For clears – cracks up to 2 mm wide.
  - For merchantable grade – surface cracks, knot cracks and knots dislodging are acceptable as long as the decking remains securely fixed.
- Average gaps between boards are 2–12 mm depending on season, recent rain, specifications and grade and species of timber used. [Fixing should be done using spacers such as 3 mm diameter nails to ensure consistency.]



- At butt joints, gaps during dry weather are no greater than 6 mm.
- Fixings along and across the deck align to within 3 mm.
- Normal changes in appearance over time – fading of stain and oil finishes and silvering/uneven weathering of uncoated timber.

- Fixings are not flush with the decking (unless this was specified). If fixings are driven more than 2 mm below the surface, water can pool. Fixings standing above the surface can be a hazard.
- Splits through the full depth of the timber that develop within 12 months.

## DEFECTS

These features of a newly built timber-slatted deck are not acceptable:

- The timber boards are broken, split (including at the ends), cracked or otherwise damaged at handover.
- The timber boards are cupped more than  $\pm 3$  mm/100 mm width.
- The surface slopes more than  $\pm 10$  mm/2 m length.
- The surface is out of level by more than  $\pm 8$  mm/any 3 m length.
- There are inconsistent gaps between boards.
- The end heights of boards at butt joints differ by more than 3 mm.
- End joints are not staggered.

Timber decking must have a minimum 15-year durability (with not less than 50 years for the joists, bearers and piles).

NZS 3631:1988 covers softwood timber from clears (which are generally more stable over the seasons) to merchantable grade (the lower end of quality and price). There are other grades in the market with names such as premium that are not defined in the standard. In these cases, the timber supplier should provide more details.

For more information about the Building Code and standards requirements for timber decks, see *Build* magazine's *Timber decks supplement* at [www.buildmagazine.org.nz/articles/show/timber-decks-introduction](http://www.buildmagazine.org.nz/articles/show/timber-decks-introduction).



## Mouthpiece

A new programme announced by the government will provide major benefits to both the construction industry and young New Zealanders looking for work.

The government's Mana in Mahi programme announced on 9 August will help get young Kiwis into apprenticeships by subsidising wages paid to 18–24-year-olds who have been on a benefit for 6 months or more.

The policy will provide not just jobs for young people but an opportunity to develop skills and gain qualifications that will set them up for a long-term career in the construction industry.

There is plenty of construction work to do. With so many of our country's young people not in education or employment, it makes a lot of sense to help them into the industry with a pathway for career development in place.

It is a win-win situation – employers also have the ability to take on more employees because of the government's commitment to subsidise their wages.

Government programmes will be an essential part of preparing New Zealand for the changing world of work. Work is changing rapidly, and as a nation, we need to be preparing young people by giving them the experience and skills needed to handle that. E tū is relieved to have a government that's looking towards the future.

The programme currently covers a range of industries including construction, hospitality, hairdressing/beauty and dairy, with the potential for this to expand as more employers get on board.

**Ron Angel**  
E tū



# GETTING ALARMED

In most fatal house fires, there were no working smoke alarms. Alarms give occupants a crucial warning to escape to safety.

Smoke alarms are a requirement under New Zealand Building Code clause F7 *Warning systems*. This applies to new homes and all existing homes undergoing building work.

Acceptable Solution F7/AS1 requires Type 1 smoke alarms, which must have:

- a hush button to silence the alarm for at least 60 seconds
- a test button
- a sound level that complies with NZS 4514:2009 *Interconnected smoke alarms for houses* (not less than 75 dBA at the sleeping position and not more than 100 dBA at 1.8 m height).

Some alarms are battery powered while others are hard wired to the mains – these are more reliable. Some new alarms are much smaller than older types.

Although not a requirement in houses, smoke alarms should be interconnected so that, when one smoke alarm detects fire smoke, all alarms will sound. Some models connect wirelessly.

NZS 4514:2009 can be downloaded for free from [www.standards.govt.nz/sponsored-standards/building-standards](http://www.standards.govt.nz/sponsored-standards/building-standards).

## How many?

F7/AS1 requires alarms on every level in multi-storey buildings and either in every sleeping space or within 3 m of a sleeping space door.

Where a single smoke alarm is installed (which is not considered sensible), it should be between the living and sleeping spaces. At least two alarms should be installed where living spaces separate sleeping areas.

F7/AS1 also requires that alarms must be audible to occupants sleeping in rooms with closed doors. Fire and Emergency New Zealand recommends installing an alarm in each sleeping and living space – a sensible approach to ensure full compliance with F7/AS1.

## Where?

Alarms should be on the ceiling (the preferred option) or high on a wall. If on a wall, install 100 mm from the ceiling and 600 mm from a corner to avoid dead air pockets.

Do not install:

- in a kitchen, garage or bathroom
- near a heat source
- in damp or draughty areas.

Vacuum over smoke alarms to avoid dust build-up, and test with the test button monthly.

All rental homes must have smoke alarms, hard wired or with a battery life of at least 8 years.



Photo courtesy CAVIUS™ Nano Limited

# 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 [buildsubs@branz.co.nz](mailto:buildsubs@branz.co.nz).

**Build now free online**

**[www.buildmagazine.org.nz](http://www.buildmagazine.org.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

**[branz.nz](http://branz.nz)**

# Competition

Here is a tool



What is it?

**WIN!**



**A HiKOKI  
190 mm circular saw  
worth \$199!**

This robust yet light tool has a die-cast base for accurate fine cuts. Great performance and versatility! (Hitachi Koki is being renamed HiKOKI.)

The prize is provided courtesy of The ToolShed.

All you need to do is tell us the name of the mystery tool at the top of the page.

Email your answer to [buildersmate@branz.co.nz](mailto:buildersmate@branz.co.nz). Put "October 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 16 November 2018. Details will be posted on the BRANZ Ltd website ([www.branz.nz](http://www.branz.nz)) and in the next edition of **Builder's Mate** due out on 1 December 2018.



Winner of **Builder's Mate 91** is Annaliese Hill of Matua (Tauranga). Annaliese wins a Milwaukee tool organiser pocket with tools. The mystery tool was a cordless 12 v caulking gun.

## Terms and conditions:

Entry is open to all New Zealand residents except employees and immediate families of BRANZ and The ToolShed shops. The competition will close at 9 am on Friday 16 November 2018. The prize is not transferable for cash. The judge's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

# + BUILDERS' APPS



In this series, we introduce some great apps and tools for your smartphone. The apps can be found in the iPhone store and/or the Android store. If you know any you'd like to recommend, email us the details at [buildersmate@branz.co.nz](mailto:buildersmate@branz.co.nz).



## MAGNIFIER WITH TORCH

Huge magnification is possible, with the torch kicking in when it's dark. These tools have more features than just using your phone camera.

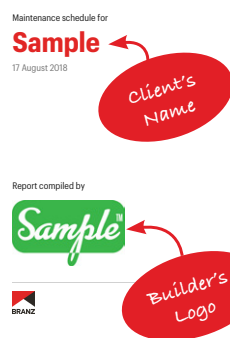
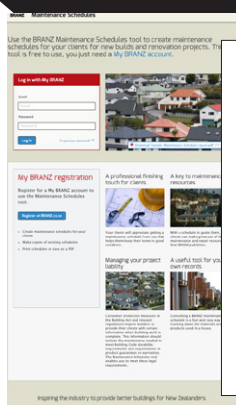


## LOAN CALCULATOR

What is the total interest on a loan? What are the advantages of different repayment amounts or periods? Get the answers at your fingertips.



## Maintenance Schedules Enhancements



We have launched a new format and layout for the maintenance schedules reports that you create and provide to your clients at the end of each project.

The changes allow you to use your logo in the schedules you create. We've also added a list of useful resources and tools at the end of the report to help the homeowner maintain their property.

The new look and layout will apply to your existing schedules as well as any new schedules you create.

[www.maintenanceschedules.co.nz](http://www.maintenanceschedules.co.nz)

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: 0800 782 632 or [www.standards.co.nz](http://www.standards.co.nz).

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