Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

Self Certification

Self-certification - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

This document explains how self-certification works, how to apply for a self-certification endorsement, and what practitioners need to know before applying to be part of the scheme. It is intended as general guidance for practitioners. If you are unsure of anything, including how the requirements apply to your circumstances, please contact the Board on 0800 743 262 or self-cert@pgdb.co.nz.

Applications

Do I have to apply for self-certification?

No. Self-certification is optional. If you do not apply for an endorsement, you can continue working under the existing process, with the Building Consent Authority (BCA) inspecting the work as usual.

What can I do if I am having trouble completing my application?

First, check that your internet connection is working. Then check that you are using the most recent version of your web browser, and your Trade Login contact details are current. You may also need to clear your browser cache.

If you still need help, contact the Board on 0800 743 262. Please tell us which part of the process you are trying to complete. Depending on your issue, it may be helpful to tell us what device and browser you are using, the wording of any error message, and/or what your issue relates to (e.g. your Trade Login, identity verification, training, payment or the application form).

Do I need insurance?

Yes. You must have appropriate insurance in place before applying for a self-certification endorsement. The Board does not prescribe a specific type of policy, insurer or amount of cover because insurance needs can vary depending on your business structure, employment arrangements and the type of work you carry out.

It is your responsibility to make sure your insurance is appropriate for the self-certification work you undertake. If you are employed, talk to your employer. You may also wish to speak with your insurer or insurance broker.

Will the Board check my insurance when I apply?

The Board does not verify insurance policies during the application process. Rather when you apply, you will be asked to declare that you meet the insurance requirements.

However, insurance may be checked later through the Board's audit process. If you are selected for audit, you may be asked to provide evidence of your insurance arrangements.

Can I charge a client for self-certification work?

If you hold an endorsement the ability to certify your own work is a service you can offer to clients, like any other service. What you charge a client for that service is a commercial matter between you and your client.

You should make your charges clear before the work begins and describe them accurately on any quote or invoice e.g. fee for inspecting work and issuing certificate of compliance.

If you do agree to certify your work, you are required by law to provide the certificate within 10 working days of completing the work. You cannot withhold the certificate for any reason such as non-payment or because you are in a dispute with the client.

Am I automatically endorsed if I am a certifying plumber or drainlayer?

No. You need to apply separately for a self-certification endorsement. You cannot certify work until your endorsement has been approved, paid for, and appears on your licence.

Why is the application process online?

Self-certification relies on online systems. If you hold a self-certification endorsement, you will need to use the online Register for certificates and the online inspection tool (Artisan) as part of the inspection process.

You can ask someone to help you understand or navigate the application. However, you must personally complete any identity checks, declarations, training and assessments required.

Training and identity verification

Do I have to complete training?

Yes. You must successfully complete the required self-certification training and assessment before your application can be approved. The training helps make sure you understand your responsibilities under the scheme.

What happens if I do not pass the training assessment?

If you do not pass after three attempts, a seven-day stand-down period applies before you can try again. This period cannot be waived. It gives you time to review the training material before attempting the assessment again.

Can someone else complete the training for me?

No. You must personally complete the identity verification, training and assessments. You may discuss the training material with others, but another person must not complete the training, sit the assessment, answer questions on your behalf or give you the answers to the questions.

Do I have to repeat the training when I renew?

No. The initial training only needs to be completed as part of your first application. However, you may need to complete continuing professional development requirements during the endorsement period to maintain your endorsement.

Why do I need to provide ID?

Identity verification confirms that the person completing the training is the same person applying for the endorsement. This is important because the endorsement gives practitioners extra responsibility, including the ability to certify eligible work without the usual Council inspection.

Self-certifying

What work can I self-certify?

You can only certify plumbing and drainlaying work that comes within the definitions of self-certifiable work and only if the building consent allows for the work to be self-certified. If the building consent does allow the work to be self-certified, you can only certify work you have personally carried out or which has been carried out by your supervisees under your supervision.

Can I self-certify work before my endorsement appears on my licence?

No. You must wait until your self-certification endorsement has been approved, paid for and appears on your licence before you can begin to certify your work. The work will also need to be approved for self-certification on the building consent. Until then, the normal BCA inspection process continues to apply.

How do I self-certify a job?

Once you have an endorsement, you can begin to certify qualifying plumbing and drainlaying work rather than having it inspected. However, you will only be able to certify work where the building consent allows for the work to be self-certified.

When the person applying for building consent (for example, the homeowner, developer or builder) applies for a building consent, they can choose to apply for the plumbing or drainlaying work to be inspected in the usual way or be self-certified. To be self-certified, the plumbing and drainlaying must come within the definitions of self-certifiable plumbing and drainlaying set by the regulations. The BCA is responsible for checking this when considering a building consent application.

Where the BCA determines that the plumbing or drainlaying work can be self-certified, it will issue a building consent that does not include inspections for the plumbing and drainlaying. Where the BCA determines that the plumbing or drainlaying work cannot be self-certified, it will issue a consent with the usual plumbing and drainage inspections.

The BCA may also issue a building consent that includes some work that can be self-certified and other work which must be inspected in the usual way.

Before work starts, you will need to see the building consent to understand what work you can certify on that job. If you hold a current endorsement, you can carry out the work in the usual way but must complete the required inspections, record the required evidence using the online inspection tool, and issue a certificate of compliance when the work is complete.

The certificate of compliance must be provided to the consent owner and BCA within 10 working days of completion. This is a legal requirement, and it is an offence not to provide the certificate within that timeframe.

The certificate of compliance is then relied on by the BCA when granting a code compliance certificate. Detailed guidance on the self-certification process is available through the Board's training modules and MBIE supporting guidance material.

What happens if I start a job as self-certification but later find that some of the work cannot be self-certified?

It is critical that you see the building consent **before** you begin doing any job that may be self-certifiable. The building consent sets out what can be done and how, and you must follow the requirements set out in the consent.

If you are doing a job that is self-certifiable, but changes are made to the plumbing or drainage, you will need to consider whether the work remains self-certifiable. Some changes won't mean the work can no longer be self-certified, but some changes will. Where there are changes, before doing the work you should have a conversation with the consent owner or the BCA to determine whether the work can continue as self-certifiable or whether inspections will now be required.

Can I choose to use normal BCA inspections even though I am endorsed?

Yes. Self-certification is optional. Holding an endorsement does not mean you must certify every eligible job you do. This will be a matter you will agree with the client. You can choose to use the normal BCA inspection process for a job instead. However, you will need to check the building consent because it will say whether the work is to be inspected or self-certified. If the work is recorded as being self-certified and you do not want to certify it, you will either need to turn the job down or ask the consent owner to have the consent changed.

It will be important to clarify this before starting any work.

Can I self-certify some work on a project and have the BCA inspect other plumbing or drainlaying?

It is possible for a building consent to provide for some work to be self-certified and some to be inspected on the same job. You will have to check the consent to see what is allowed in each case.

Can I self-certify work that has already started by someone else?

This will depend on whether the building consent provides for the work to be self-certified or inspected. If the consent allows for the work to be self-certified, you will be able to complete the work and certify it if you are endorsed. However, you will be certifying all of the work and not just

the parts of it you have personally carried out so you will need to be confident in the work which has already been carried out as you will be taking responsibility for it by certifying it.

If the building consent does not allow the work to be self-certified, it will have to be inspected in the usual way.

What if the work changes during the project?

If the work changes, or you identify that part of the work is not self-certifiable, you must discuss it with the consent owner and the BCA. They will need to consider whether the work can continue to be self-certified or whether some or all of it will need to be inspected. Do not just go ahead and complete the job without checking what is required first.

Why does the COC only last 30 days in the Register? How can I get a copy after 30 days?

It is the responsibility of the endorsed practitioner to retain their own records, including copies of certificates of compliance and supporting documentation. When a certificate of compliance is completed, a copy is automatically emailed to the endorsed practitioner by the Register. Practitioners should also ensure that copies of the certificate of compliance are provided to the homeowner and the Building Consent Authority. Certificates of compliance are a part of the code compliance certificate process.

The Board will retain certificates of compliance for a limited period of time to support its audit function. However, they will not be retained indefinitely and will be permanently deleted after a set period of time. If you are unable to locate a certificate, contact the Board and we can discuss what information may be available and what options exist.

Online inspection tool

Why do I need to use Artisan?

Artisan is the online inspection tool used for the self-certification scheme. It gives you a consistent and easy way to record inspections and evidence and gives the Board easy access to the information it needs to audit the work.

Can someone else upload the photos for me?

No. The endorsed practitioner is responsible for completing the inspection, collecting the evidence, and certifying that the work complies. You must attend the site, complete the inspection yourself, and take or upload the photographs required to support the evidential record.

What if there is no mobile coverage on site?

You can take the required photographs using your phone's camera and upload them into Artisan as soon as possible after when you have mobile coverage. The photographs must still be taken during the inspection and must accurately show the work being certified.

Who do I contact about a problem with Artisan versus a problem with my endorsement or application?

If the issue relates to using the Artisan inspection tool, such as logging in, uploading photographs, or recording inspection information, contact Artisan support on 0800 80 80 85 or by email artisan@branz.co.nz in the first instance. If the issue relates to your self-certification endorsement, application, eligibility, fees, renewal, or Board requirements, contact the Board.

Fees, renewal and audits

Why are there fees for self-certification?

The fees help recover the cost of running the scheme. This includes processing applications, maintaining systems, operating the certificate register, providing training material, monitoring compliance and carrying out audits. The costs sit with practitioners who choose to apply for and use the endorsement, rather than being spread across all practitioners.

The Government funded the costs of setting up the self-certification scheme. Once the scheme is operating, the law requires the ongoing costs of the scheme to be met by the practitioners who choose to participate, rather than those costs being spread across all licensed practitioners.

The Board is operating the scheme on a cost-recovery basis only. The fee and audit levy fund the ongoing costs of operating and overseeing the scheme, including processing applications, maintaining the Register and online systems, providing training and guidance, monitoring compliance, and carrying out audits.

Because self-certification is a new scheme, the Board has had to estimate the likely number of practitioners who will take up the endorsement, the volume of self-certification work, the level of audit activity required, and the ongoing costs of operating the scheme.

The fee is not charged per certificate or per job because the legislation does not allow the Board to charge for the scheme in that way.

Self-certification is optional. Practitioners can decide whether the endorsement is right for them based on their business and the amount and type of work they undertake.

What happens if I let my certifying licence lapse?

A self-certification endorsement sits on your certifying practising licence. If your practising licence is not current, you will not be endorsed and you will not have access to the self-certification Register.

Will I be audited?

The Board will audit some endorsed practitioners as part of its monitoring of the scheme. People will be selected to be audited using a mix of routine and risk-based approaches. All endorsed practitioners are required to keep complete and accurate records and be prepared to provide information if selected for audit.

Can the Board suspend or cancel my endorsement?

Yes. The Board can suspend or cancel an endorsement where there are legal grounds for doing so. This may include situations where a practitioner no longer meets the endorsement requirements, has provided false or misleading information, or has not complied with scheme requirements. The outcome will depend on the circumstances of the case.