

Owner-builders

Being an owner-builder

An owner-builder is someone who takes responsibility for domestic building work carried out on their own land. As an owner-builder, you will be responsible for:

- obtaining building permits and paying the building permit levy
- supervising or undertaking the building work
- ensuring the work meets building regulations and standards; and
- notifying the VBA if the estimated cost of works has increased at the end of the project.

Owner-builder consent

If the value of the domestic building work you will be doing is over \$16,000, you will need to obtain a certificate of consent from the VBA to be an owner-builder.

You do not need a certificate of consent if:

- the total cost of the domestic building work is \$16,000 or less
- the building work does not relate to domestic building work
- a registered building practitioner has been engaged to oversee the work; or
- you are carrying out the work in accordance with an emergency order, a building notice or a building order made under Part 8 of the *Building Act 1993* (the Act).

Can I be an owner-builder?

To be eligible for an owner-builder certificate of consent, you must meet the following requirements:

- You are the owner of the land.
- The building work is in relation to, or ancillary to, a single domestic dwelling.
- You reside or intend to reside in the dwelling.
- You are not in the business of building.
- You have successfully completed the owner-builder eLearning assessment and undertaken construction induction training for the project.
- You have not previously entered into a contract to sell an owner-built home without obtaining the required insurance.
- You have not been issued with a building permit as an owner-builder in the previous five years for a different property (you may request an exemption if there are special circumstances, such as economic hardship, that might result if the application was refused).

Can I carry out demolition work?

Owner-builder projects must relate to the construction or renovation of single domestic dwellings. As a result, owner-builders are not permitted to carry out demolition work. You will need to engage a building practitioner registered as a Demolisher to undertake any demolition work.

Contracts with other tradespeople

As an owner-builder, you will need to enter into a major domestic building contract when you use a registered domestic builder, contractor or tradesperson to do work on your project costing more than \$10,000 (unless a single trade exemption applies).

Registered builders, contractors and tradespeople must have domestic building insurance for all work costing more than \$16,000 (to cover you if they die, become insolvent or disappear). This is in addition to the builder's contractual obligations and warranties.

Some builders or tradespeople may ask you to apply for an owner-builder certificate of consent so that you appear as an owner-builder on the building permit, even though they will be doing all of the work. If you do this, it may put you at risk, as the person may be unregistered or trying to avoid their legal responsibilities. You are not an owner-builder if you intend to engage one tradesperson to do all of the building work.

How do I apply for a certificate of consent?

Before applying to the VBA for a certificate of consent to become an owner-builder, you should download the [Owner-Builder Information and Study Guide](#) from the VBA website. The study guide provides essential information about being an owner-builder and includes an outline of your duties and responsibilities and the steps you must take to complete your application.

Applications for an owner-builder certificate of consent must be lodged through [VBA360](#), the VBA's online self-service portal.

Want to know more?

If you have any questions about this information, please contact the VBA.

Telephone: 1300 815 127

Email: customerservice@vba.vic.gov.au

Victorian Building Authority

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