What is Building Surveyor work?

A guide to read before you apply for registration

Do you have the skills, knowledge and experience to apply for registration as a Building Surveyor? To help you, this guide explains the typical tasks for this category of building practitioner. If you are asked to an assessment interview, some of your interview questions will be based on this information.

1. What is Building Surveyor work?

Building Surveyors provide independent oversight of buildings and building work throughout the construction process and upon completion of construction to ensure that buildings are safe for use, accessible and energy efficient. They do this by:

- assessing and approving (where appropriate) applications for building permits
- undertaking inspections of buildings and building work
- approving building occupation/use (where appropriate).

A person registered as a Building Surveyor in Victoria may carry out the following functions under the Building Act 1993:

- issue building permits
- carry out inspections of buildings and building work
- issue certificates of final inspection and occupancy permits
- approve temporary occupation of buildings, and
- enforce safety and building standards through:
  - giving and enforcing directions to fix non-compliant building work
  - causing a building notice to be served
  - making building orders, and
  - making emergency orders (municipal building surveyors only).

Building work\(^1\) may not be carried out in Victoria unless a building permit has been issued (or the work is exempt from a building permit under the building regulations), and work must be carried out in accordance with the building permit, the Building Act 1993, and the building regulations.

The purpose of the building permit system is to ensure that all buildings and building work comply with building legislation and regulations prior to work commencing, and that they meet minimum standards and safety requirements once constructed. Building Surveyors perform a critical role in the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of building standards in Victoria through their administration of the building permit system.

2. What are the two classes of Building Surveyor?

The two classes of Building Surveyor are:

- Building Surveyor (Limited)
- Building Surveyor (Unlimited).

Building Surveyor (Limited)

Persons registered in the Building Surveyor (Limited) class are responsible for carrying out the functions of a building surveyor in respect of buildings of all BCA classes\(^2\), up to three storeys in height with a maximum floor area of 2000 square metres.

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\(^1\) ‘Building work’ means work for or connected to the construction, demolition or removal of a building. ‘Building’ includes structure, temporary building, temporary structure and any part of a building or structure.

\(^2\) Classes of building as classified in the Building Code of Australia.
Building Surveyor (Unlimited)

Persons registered in the Building Surveyor (Unlimited) class are responsible for carrying out the functions of a building surveyor in respect of buildings of all BCA classes, regardless of the height and floor area.

3. What do registered practitioners need to know and do?

A registered Building Surveyor must have capacity to undertake the following activities in a competent manner and to a professional standard:

**Issue building permits**
- Assess and determine an application for a building permit
- Consider and determine the appropriateness of proposed protection work
- Issue a building permit
- Calculate and collect the building permit levy
- Building permit levy accounting and record keeping

**Carry out inspections of buildings and building work**
- Carry out inspections of building work to verify if the building work complies with the building permit, the Building Act 1993 and building regulations
- Prepare a written record of building work inspected, documenting details of non-compliant features

**Issue certificates of final inspection and occupancy permits**
- Issue a certificate of final inspection
- Assess and determine an application for an occupancy permit
- Issue an occupancy permit
- Cancel an occupancy permit

**Issue approvals for temporary occupation of buildings**
- Assess and determine an application for temporary occupation of a building
- Issue an approval for temporary occupation of a building
- Cancel an approval for temporary occupation of a building

**Enforce safety and building standards**
- Give and enforce directions to fix non-compliant building work after an inspection of the building work
- Cause a building notice to be served
- Cancel a building notice
- Make a building order
- Amend or cancel a building order
- Inspect building work required by a building order
- Make an emergency order (Municipal Building Surveyors only)
- Cancel an emergency order (Municipal Building Surveyors only).

4. What knowledge do you need to demonstrate?

You must demonstrate that you have relevant knowledge for registration, including:
- BCA classifications and definitions for residential and commercial classes of buildings
- construction methods and materials suitable for residential and commercial buildings and structures
- construction methods and materials applicable to performance based solutions
- how building components, systems and services interact with each other
• principles and procedures for providing protection to the public and adjoining properties during the construction and demolition of structures
• human movement, ergonomics, and issues associated with access for people with a disability and the principles of universal design
• energy efficiency design principles
• structural engineering principles
• fire engineering principles
• the circumstances in which the relevant building surveyor may determine that an alternative solution complies with a fire performance requirement of the BCA
• building services installations (mechanical, electrical, fire, lift and hydraulic services)
• principles used for performance based designs, and methodologies for determining correct performance requirements to be satisfied
• the range of, and variations in, compliance requirements for residential and commercial buildings in different climatic, geographic and planning zones, including the Building Act 1993 and the building regulations, the NCC, Australian standards references by the Act, regulations and NCC, and VBA policies
• drawing symbols, notations, acronyms and construction technology used in the National Construction Code (NCC), Australian standards, working drawings, building design specifications and building permit documentation.
• legislative and local planning and building requirements governing the issuing of a building permit
• legislative and regulatory requirements for inspecting domestic and commercial classes of building at initial and advanced construction stages
• causes of building defects and potential remedies

Building Surveyor (Limited)
If you have successfully completed one of the following qualifications, you will satisfy the knowledge requirements for registration in the Building Surveyor (Limited) class:
• Bachelor of Building Surveying from Holmesglen Institute
• Bachelor of Building Surveying from Victoria University
• Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying (CPC60115).

If you have successfully completed the Diploma of Building Surveying (CPC50108), you will satisfy some of the knowledge required for registration in the Building Surveyor (Limited) class.

This qualification covers knowledge requirements associated with building surveying work for residential buildings, and domestic scale buildings.

Building Surveyor (Unlimited)
If you have successfully completed one of the following qualifications, you will satisfy the knowledge requirements for registration in the Building Surveyor (Unlimited) class:
• Bachelor of Building Surveying from Holmesglen Institute
• Bachelor of Building Surveying from Victoria University.

If you have successfully completed the Advanced Diploma in Building Surveying, you will satisfy some of the knowledge required for registration in this class.

This qualification covers only the knowledge requirements associated with building surveying work for all classes of building up to three storeys in height.
5. What experience do you need to demonstrate?

Building Surveyor (Limited)
You must demonstrate that you have at least two years of relevant practical experience in:

- assisting a registered building surveyor in assessing applications for building permits, occupancy permits and temporary occupation of buildings
- carrying out initial and advanced construction inspections for residential and commercial buildings
- identifying and reporting on non-compliance with building control legislation, building regulations and the building permit issued in relation to the work
- preparing written directions to fix building work that is not compliant with building control legislation, building regulations and the building permit issued in relation to the work
- preparing building notices and building orders for residential, commercial and industrial buildings:
  - up to three storeys in height with a maximum floor area of up to 2000 square metres
  - above three storeys in height
  - with a maximum floor area of more than 2000 square metres.

How you get experience
For your work under supervision in relation to carrying out construction inspections, the supervising Building Inspector or Building Surveyor must be authorised to carry such an inspection, and you must have carried out the inspection in their presence, at their direction.

Building Surveyor (Unlimited)
You must demonstrate that you have at least three years of relevant practical experience in:

- assisting a registered building surveyor to assess applications for building permits, occupancy permits and temporary occupation of buildings
- carrying out initial and advanced construction inspections for residential and commercial buildings
- identifying and reporting on non-compliance with building control legislation, building regulations and the building permit issued in relation to the work
- preparing written directions to fix building work that is not compliance with building control legislation, building regulations and the building permit issued in relation to the work

Your next step
If you think you have the required skills, knowledge and experience to be a registered Building Surveyor, go to the VBA website to learn how to apply for registration.