

AON SPRINKLER CERTIFICATION



Aon New Zealand

Aon Fire Protection
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Aon Sprinkler Certification Technical Note		
Note Number: TN20-41	Issue: 1	Date: 11 February 2020
Subject	Requirement for a Building Consent	
Notice: Aon Sprinkler Certification Technical Notes provide guidance notes which may be used in certification of sprinkler installations by Aon New Zealand. If sprinkler installations are being certified by any other Sprinkler System Certifier, these Technical Notes may not apply.		

On several occasions, Aon has been asked to certify major and minor alterations to sprinkler and alarm systems, that were not carried out under a building consent. Aon requires evidence that work to a specified system (including alarm and sprinkler systems) has been consented prior to issuing any form of certification.

The Building Act 2004 Section 40 requires that all building work be carried out under a building consent. Section 41 provides various limited exemptions to this requirement.

The latest issue of MBIE's Codewords reports on a fine issued to a Licensed Building Practitioner for failing to ensure that a building consent had been issued for work carried out.

https://www.building.govt.nz/about-building-performance/news-and-updates/codewords/codewords-issue-94/lbp-found-negligent-for-not-checking-building-consent-exemption?utm_source=LBP5&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Codewords94

The Codewords article states: "If LBPs receive advice from clients that building consent is not needed, it is still the responsibility of the LBP to check that this information is correct by making sure that it is covered under either Schedule 1 of the Building Act (which has limited exemptions) or by an exemption issued by the council."

A description of what minor works on a specified system, (which includes sprinkler and alarm systems) is provided in a MBIE publication which can be downloaded from the following link:

<https://www.building.govt.nz/projects-and-consents/planning-a-successful-build/scope-and-design/check-if-you-need-consents/building-consent-exemptions-for-low-risk-work/schedule-1-guidance/>

Some of the pertinent extracts from this document are:

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Replacing a damaged fire sprinkler head in the same position in a commercial building. This work is not considered substantial as only one fire sprinkler head is being replaced rather than the whole specified system.

A commercial property owner wants to install some simple full height partitioning. This will involve relocating several fire sprinkler heads. As this building work is a modification to a specified system, a building consent will be required.

The owner of a commercial building wants to install a roof window into an existing roof and ceiling to a top floor office. As this building is not a dwelling or outbuilding and as the roof window installation will affect the existing sprinkler system, a building consent is required.

It is clear that MBIE's opinion is that even relatively minor works will require that either a building consent, or an exemption for a consent, be uplifted prior to the works commencing.

Aon, in conjunction with the Fire Protection Association is preparing a submission to MBIE to request that the requirements for a consent be relaxed, to reflect the routine reinspection regime in the sprinkler and alarm standards which provide surety of compliance, without the cost of the consenting process. This will require an amendment to Schedule 1 of the Building Act, which needs Parliamentary approval, and therefore this proposed revision will take time and is not guaranteed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Mak', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Mak
MANAGER – AON FIRE PROTECTION